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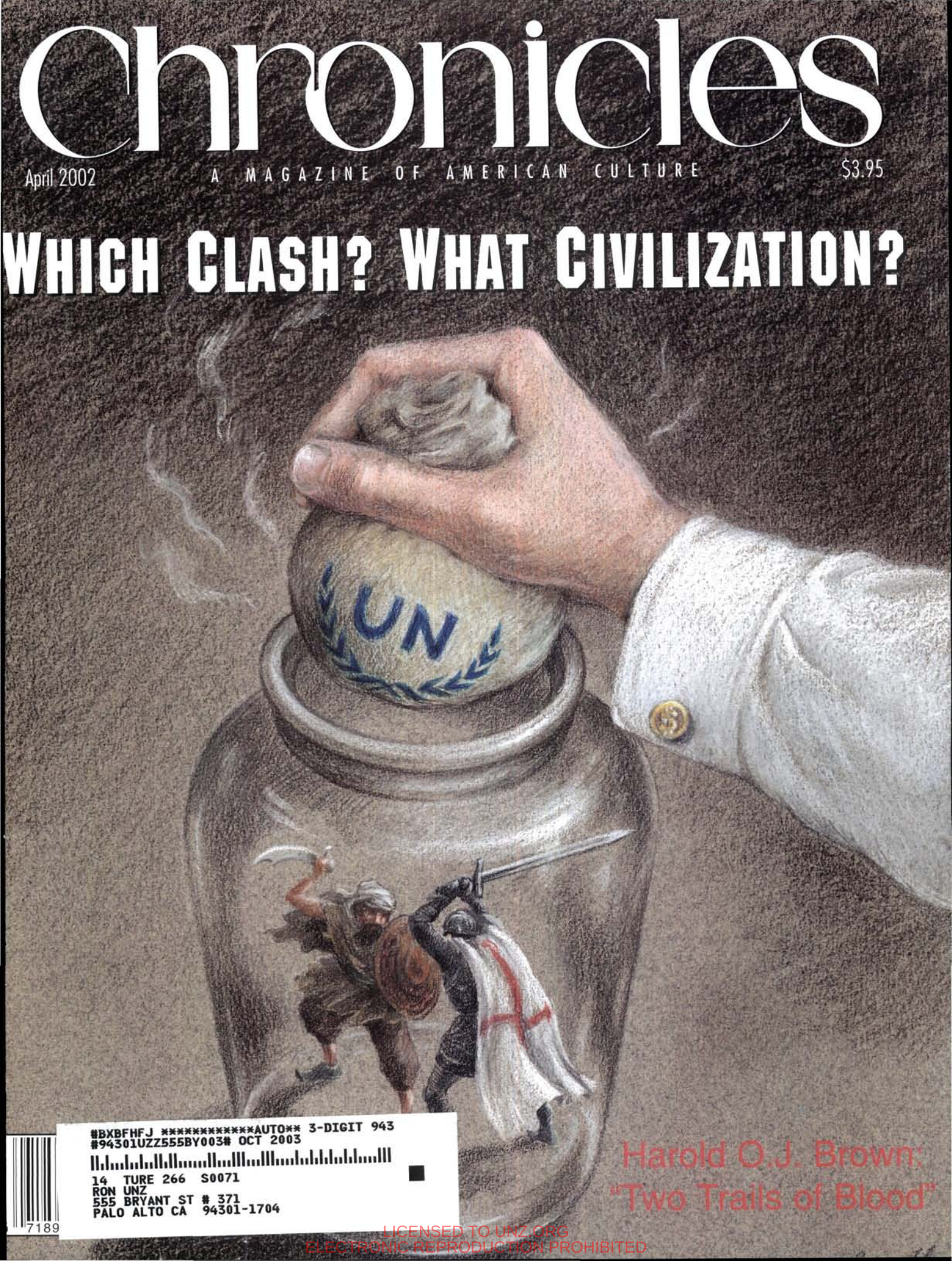

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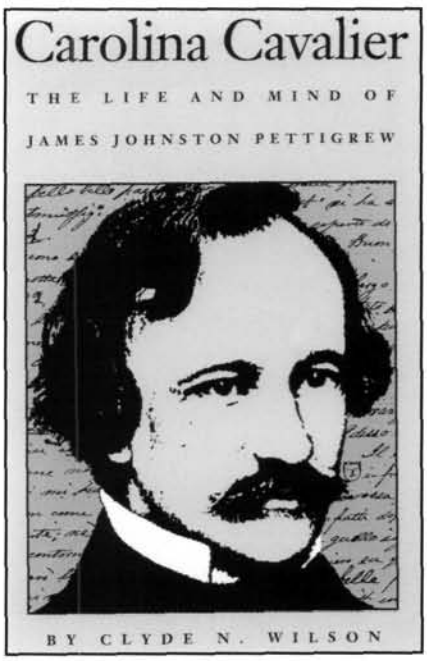

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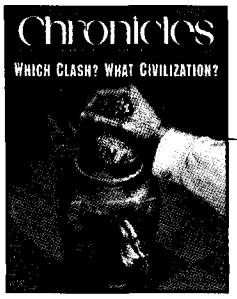

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On Bursting Bubbles

Greg Kaza ("Economic Liberty and American Manufacturing," *Views*, January) is to be congratulated for seizing hold of two important realities: that the late 1990's saw a financial bubble of historic proportions, the origins and implications of which are poorly understood; and that incomes for the median- and lower-wage earner, when adjusted for inflation, have seen little progress over the last three decades.

Wage stagnation is something that, frankly, puzzles academic economists. At the risk of appearing obsessed, I suspect that the impact of the extraordinary immigration over the last 30 years, unmentioned by Kaza, will ultimately prove greater than is currently believed. (At the moment, academic economists generally accept only that it has affected the incomes of the unskilled, albeit substantially.) The extraordinary strength of the American dollar, not mentioned directly by Kaza, has also made American exports more expensive and foreign imports cheaper. It is hardly surprising that the auto industry has suffered—and, more generally, manufacturing wages with it.

But why has the U.S. dollar been so strong? Markets do overshoot, sometimes for years. But I have a horrible feeling that Kaza is right to point to the LTCM bailout—coupled, since his article appeared, with the Enron fiasco—as evidence that something is fatally wrong in the system. Conspiracy theorists on Wall Street believe that authorities and key financial actors have colluded to manipulate markets for public ends—and, quite possibly, private gain. Paranoids, as we all know, do have enemies. And, in this case, even if they don't, the economic hiccup which Kaza and I both believe may follow the excesses of the 1990's will make them sound credible. I suspect that we may well see the equivalent of the witch-hunting Nye hearings, advancing government at the expense of free markets, in this decade.

Ironically—and here I suspect I may differ from the official *Chronicles* line—the real culprit is not the market but the authorities. Why do we have a Federal Reserve anyway? But that, of course, was the story of the Depression, the nightmare from which we only awoke in time to repeat as farce.

—Peter Brimelow
Connecticut Berkshires

The observations of Greg Kaza concerning the sorry state of blue-collar American workers due to the decline of manufacturing need to be heeded by conservatives. There are now more government workers in the United States than manufacturing workers—and that's not even counting the legion of suppliers to government and those who draw welfare.

This growth in parasites at the expense of productive workers has been financed by borrowing abroad and selling our physical and financial assets to foreigners—a "buy now, pay later" proposition.

Kaza attributes the demise of American manufacturing to the explosive growth of the money supply and the demand abroad for dollars and dollar-denominated assets. While he may be on to something, it is not clear that he has identified the root causes—that *both* the decline of American manufacturing *and* the explosion of the dollar supply may be consequences of more fundamental structural problems.

Why have changes in exchange rates not offset the effect of the excessive supply of dollars in order to balance U.S. exports with U.S. imports? Eliminating the U.S. trade deficit of over a third of a *trillion* dollars per year would be the single most important way to resuscitate the manufacturing sector.

Why do foreigners prefer to buy U.S. assets instead of U.S. manufactured goods? Why do U.S. manufacturers prefer to make goods abroad rather than here? The answers lie in the inefficiencies of our federal tax code, the sorry state of American public education, and the failure of U.S. foreign policy to defend real American interests.

The federal government taxes income saved for investment, then corporate income, then dividends and capital gains from that income—and then taxes the composite upon death. Even though the typical Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) country has higher *average rates* on personal incomes, it has lower *composite marginal rates* on investment income. So foreigners have a higher propensity to

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save and invest, and Americans have a higher propensity to consume. Also, nearly all OECD countries other than the United States abate their principal corporate tax, the VAT (value-added tax) on exports and levy it on imports. These *ad valorem* taxes have, in effect, replaced *ad valorem* tariffs. "Free trade" has been a one-way street to the poorhouse for U.S. manufacturers and their workers.

A recent report by the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas compared the average literacy rate of U.S. border cities with Mexican border cities. For the United States as a whole, literacy rates average 75 to 77 percent; for Texas, 75 percent; and for Mexican border cities, 95 percent. Do manufacturers move plants to Mexico just for lower labor rates, or to get workers who can read and follow instructions? We cannot even educate an adequate supply of engineers to run our shrunken manufacturing sector.

When foreign debts and the loss of American values yield their inevitable consequences, will we still be able to claim that "United We Stand"? The financial bubble that Mr. Kaza observes distorts values, and the creation of values is, at its root, a manifestation of America's loss of *fundamental* values.

—David Hartman
Austin, TX

Greg Kaza correctly reveals how the "traumatic changes" in the U.S. auto and steel industries have been ignored by media pundits and neoconservatives, despite huge job losses. Unfortunately, instead of addressing the cause of those tragedies, Kaza played a "trivia game," asking how often Clinton and Reagan mentioned those industries while in office. He concludes by painting Reagan as more concerned with those industries.

Neither former president deserves credit in this regard, least of all Reagan, who took his marching orders from globalists in his "Kitchen Cabinet" and from Trade Representative William Brock and Commerce Secretary Malcolm Baldridge.

In the 34 years from 1946 to 1980, the U.S. trade deficit averaged less than one billion dollars per year. During Reagan's eight years, the trade deficit ballooned to nearly $100 billion a year. Nearly half of that deficit was with Japan, and over half was in autos and steel. Eight months after leaving office, Reagan went to Japan to collect his two-million-dollar fee for services rendered and had the gall to say that it was for two 20-minute speeches.

When Reagan took office, the federal debt was $909.1 billion. When he left office, that debt had soared to $2.6 trillion, an increase of $1.7 trillion, or 186 percent. In just eight years, Reagan piled up more debt than was accumulated in the previous 192-year history of our nation.

Every credible economist knows that production (i.e., the labor of real people) is the origin of all income, wealth, real-capital formation, tax revenue, and the ripple multiplier effect. Based on a conservative 5-to-1 multiplier effect ratio and a 40-percent marginal tax rate, had the goods represented by Reagan's trade deficits been produced in America, they would have generated over four trillion dollars in added national income (equal to $40,000 per household) and $1.6 trillion in added tax revenue to offset 94 percent of the federal debt increase during the Reagan years.

This makes no allowance for lower welfare and unemployment-benefit costs, had the growth rate of GDP under Reagan (a mere 3.13 percent) been comparable to the 4.56 percent growth rate in the preceding 21 years, nor for a 1.2 percent drop in hourly wages compared with rising wages in the preceding 21 years.

The failure of the media to expose destructive U.S. trade policies and deficits stems from an apparent delusion that the U.S. government has nothing to do with U.S. product costs. So U.S. industries and their executives, particularly in auto and steel, have been unfairly criticized for alleged shortcomings.

The truth is that, as a result of millions of federal, state, and local tax and regulatory laws, government is responsible for over 80 percent of U.S. product costs. Since all domestic taxes and the cost of regulatory laws wind up in the costs of production, they are essentially tariffs on our own products.

An honest government would protect every American company against any competitor, including foreign producers, not burdened with the same, or comparable, mandated costs. Even Adam Smith proposed tariffs on imports to equalize costs imposed by domestic governments. But that is not the guiding principle of U.S. trade policies.

Instead, U.S. companies have been the victims of outrageously immoral and unconstitutional trade policies that encourage imports made under conditions that violate our own laws by levying tariffs of just two percent—hardly a level playing field.

Kaza remarks that Fed Chairman Paul Volcker "cleaned up" the double-digit inflation of the 1970's. Volcker opted for interest rates as high as 20 percent on mortgages and a "high dollar." But that is not what brought inflation down. Rising inflation in the 1970's was largely due to oil prices that soared from about $1.75 a barrel to nearly $40. Inflation rates came down as prices fell under $20 a barrel as a result of a global oversupply and major conservation programs, including better automobile efficiency.

Volcker's tight-money policies exacerbated trade deficits, especially with Japan, as his "high dollar" caused imports to rise sharply while exports fell. By the time Reagan left office, both the auto and steel industries were on the brink of bankruptcy. In just two years, General Motors alone lost over $20 billion.

The trade and monetary policies of the Reagan years resulted in another two trillion dollars in trade deficits during the Bush and Clinton years, culminating in a $425-billion deficit in 2000, sending total trade deficits since Reagan took office to over three trillion dollars. Concurrently, the federal debt soared to $5.95 trillion, forcing the current Bush administration to request raising the debt ceiling to $6.7 trillion, making a mockery of the silly notion that we would enjoy trillions of dollars in surpluses over the next decade.

The relationship of trade deficits to the federal debt can no longer be ignored. Nor can the fact that over 20 million Americans have lost their jobs, their homes, their families, their health, and even their lives while the social fabric of our nation was being torn apart, creating the widest gap between "rich and poor" in our nation's history.

Therein lies the tragic legacy of free-trade policies. When President Bush and his aides tell us that free trade creates jobs, they are doing more than blowing smoke: They are lying.

—Gus Stelzer
Mill Creek, WA

Mr. Kaza Replies:

Mr. Hartman is correct in raising the issue of "more fundamental structural problems" in the credit structure. Mainstream economists focus on the growth of the money supply as the source of the financial bubble. Consider the frequently

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cited Money of Zero Maturity (MZM), which grew at a 13-percent annual rate between 1995 and 2001, and at 14 percent post-LTCM. But they overlook the full ramifications of non-commercial bank entities, including government-sponsored enterprises (GSEs), creating money and credit.

Consider one example among many: hedge-fund speculation through repurchase agreements (or offshore "spread" and "carry trade" derivative plays) that expand institutional fund deposits and the money supply (beyond MZM growth). This credit is recycled into U.S. financial markets. Credit growth, in response to the demand for dollar-denominated financial instruments, is the key causal factor. Foreign and domestic speculators prefer these instruments because they often deliver a greater rate of return.

The credit structure's demand for an artificially strong dollar is in conflict with the manufacturing sector's desire for a currency in equilibrium.

Much of this credit structure is centered, as Mr. Brimelow notes, in the government sector (Federal Reserve, GSEs such as Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac, and the Federal Home Loan Bank system) or among private banks whose insurance is backed by the full faith and credit of the U.S. government—i.e., the taxpayer.

Deflation has also undoubtedly contributed to the climate facing manufacturers. Japan, the world's second-largest economy, is exporting its bad deflation (and cheaper exports), and domestic manufacturers, for only the third time since World War II, face a rare "rolling deflation" that appears, disappears, and reappears. The Producer Price Index (PPI) has been negative for three of the last five years (1997, 1998, and 2001), and Consumer Price components such as "new cars" are negative while the index itself is slightly positive. General Motors and U.S. Steel could raise prices in earlier periods of rolling deflation (1948-1954, 1959-1963) but have little pricing power today.

The current manufacturing decline began almost a year before the current recession; it is also more severe, according to the National Bureau of Economic Research, which reported on February 11: "Industrial Production. A peak occurred in June 2000 and the index declined over the next 17 months by 7.1 percent, far surpassing the average decline in the earlier recessions of 4.6 percent." Consider the Eighth Federal Reserve District (St. Louis), which includes Illinois, Arkansas, and five other Midwestern and Southern states. Manufacturing employment in all seven states has contracted during this recession (Arkansas' decline, spurred by high tax rates on capital investment, is the greatest on a percentage basis), while government and service-sector employment has grown in every state except Missouri and Mississippi.

Mr. Stelzer misses my main point: My essay was meant not only to illustrate that President Clinton neglected manufacturing but to warn Republicans that Ronald Reagan was their last presidential nominee to win the industrial states of Michigan, Indiana, Wisconsin, Ohio, and Pennsylvania.

On Ludwig von Mises

Thomas Fleming's criticism of Ludwig von Mises and his student, Friedrich von Hayek ("Abuse Your Illusions," *Perspective*, January), overlooks or misinterprets major contributions of both. In *Socialism* (1922), Mises was the first economist to show the unworkability of socialist systems. He based his analysis on the impossibility of establishing a price structure for the various means of production and thus the absence of a mechanism for allocating resources in a reasonably efficient manner. In other words, he demonstrated the essential character of information—information that no central planner can possibly accumulate because most of it is subjective and fleeting. This brings up his other important contribution: the subjective nature of value. The value of something (material, of course) is what someone is willing to pay for it, not, for example, the quantity of labor that went into it.

Hayek carried the analysis of information dependence further and then began the application of "self-ordering" to any economic system. Self-ordering or "spontaneous organization" was first proposed during the Scottish Enlightenment (e.g., Adam Smith's "invisible hand") but had been forgotten. Hayek's revival of the concept was an important contribution, although he regrettably failed to pursue it. Hence, putting down Hayek with respect to this concept, as Fleming seems to have done, is completely unjustified.

The resuscitation of the economic ideas of Mises and Hayek is laying to rest the whole Keynesian enterprise. Older economists and a few younger ones with political agendas still push Keynes' ideas, but an increasing number of younger ones are abandoning them for Mises and Hayek. Admittedly (but not surprisingly), the approach of Mises and Hayek is incomplete, as are the approaches of even the very wisest economists. This lack should not obscure their very significant contributions.

—Robert C. Whitten
Cupertino, CA

I enjoyed Thomas Fleming's analysis of the shortcomings of economists Ludwig von Mises and Friedrich von Hayek in developing a corresponding theory of morality and human values. Although Hayek often criticized modern materialists and socialists, he lent solid support to much of their ideology and method. He attributed his education in the methodology of science to Bertrand Russell, the chief spokesman for logical positivism.

Like Karl Marx, Hayek writes that Christianity is a curious jumble of myths that allowed mankind to assimilate the values of capitalism and facilitated the development of free markets and industrial society. In *Science and Socialism*, Hayek remarks, "We do not owe our morals to our intelligence: we owe them to the fact that some groups uncomprehendingly accepted certain rules of conduct—the rules of private property, of honesty, and of the family—that enabled the groups to prosper, multiply, and gradually replace others . . . But the fact that our morals are not the result of man's supreme intelligence explains why we all so much dislike them."

Hayek also wrote that Christianity, having served its appointed task, is an historical relic. "There can," he writes, "be no doubt that moral and religious beliefs can destroy a civilization and that when such doctrines prevail not only the most cherished beliefs but also the most revered moral leaders may become a grave danger . . . we can protect ourselves only by subjecting our dearest desires to ruthless rational dissection."

Hayek was very suspicious of the power of nation-states, their tendency to make war, and their ability to disrupt the magical perfection and scientific efficiency of the invisible hand. This explains why, in *The Road to Serfdom*, Hayek calls for a world superstate similar to the one promoted by the Fabian society and the World Federalists. Anticipating the appearance of today's Blue Hel-

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mets—the United Nation's world police force—by almost half a century, Hayek, in 1944, outlined his "true system of law which guarantees both that the certain rules are invariably enforced and that the authority to enforce those [rules] cannot use it for any other purpose, for its task of enforcing the common law the supernational authority must be very powerful." It might have been best if Hayek had limited himself to elaborating on the intricacies of the free market.

—*David J. Peterson*
Chicago, IL

Dr. Fleming Replies:

I neither overlooked nor misinterpreted the contributions of Mises and Hayek to economic theory. Since I was writing an article about political theory and social ethics, I cannot imagine why anyone would expect any interpretation of economic theory. The absurdity of Marxist political and economic theory was noted in Marx's lifetime and after his death by many sane people (e.g., W.H. Mallock).

Bad economic systems crumble under the weight of their own contradictions of human nature, and although poverty is a great misfortune, it is not the inefficiencies of Marxism that are so terrible but the inhuman coercion practiced by communist countries against the basic tendencies and institutions of human life: marriage, the family, competition, loyalty, patriotism, ambition, etc. Communists replaced the traditional view of human nature—rooted in nature, revelation, and history—with a materialist theory that deprives human beings of their freedom and dignity. Unfortunately, Mises is no less a materialist than Marx and no less a moral relativist than any of the other self-appointed gurus who have promised to liberate us from our traditions and superstitions.

I have no quarrel with atheists and moral relativists proclaiming their blind allegiance to Ludwig von Mises; indeed, I admire more than a few of them. What I do object to is the palpable fraud that one can be a Christian Misesian or a "Catholic libertarian." Yes, Mises and Hayek did yeoman service in pointing out the absurdity of economic planning, and if I ever need someone to tell me to ask the federal government to surrender some of its power, I'll be sure to call on the Misesians. For the rest of life, Mises is of no use. Render under Mises the things that are Mises . . .

On Agrarianism and Freedom

I enjoyed Mark Winchell's "Tracts Against Capitalism" (*Vital Signs*, January) when it presented facts regarding the Agrarians, but I must take issue with a number of his opinions.

Peaceful Valley residents have more than two options regarding Wal-Mart. They could, for example, form a corporation (non-profit or otherwise) to buy the land in question, or they could raise a ruckus with the zoning authority either to block the project outright or to impose costly restrictions that would render it uneconomical. The former course is principled and conservative, the latter is just another way for government to steal the landowner's rights without paying just compensation.

Setting up mean old Wal-Mart as a foil to introduce a conservative "counter-tradition" to bigness is highly unenlightening, to put it mildly. Whether it is Wal-Mart or a neighbor who wants to build on any particular lot, the property in question is going to be developed someday. For Peaceful Valley residents to declare that they have got their little bit of heaven—and to hell with the rest—is not admirable; it is typical Malibu I've-got-mine liberalism. Is that what the Agrarians stood for?

People have loved to hate big business for 200 years, and look at the result: The big railroads of the 19th century are anemic behemoths struggling for life; big steel of the early 20th century went bust; big auto manufacturers of the 1950's face stiff competition and are losing money; and the big computer companies of the 1970's have been swamped by innovation.

The problem with bigness is that it does not adjust well to change, and that is the point: No matter how big, no corporate entity is a match for the forces of the market. To suggest that we need to cede more power to big government to battle today's corporate giants seems manifestly wrong. Rather than worry about Wal-Mart coming through the trees, the residents of every Peaceful Valley in America should worry about big government bashing down the door and looting the cupboard.

I agree with Mr. Winchell that bigness is bad and devolution is good. The solution to bigness, however, is not any sort of government action; it is more freedom. While freedom may disrupt Kathleen Dickel's breakfast, it is the only sure way we can achieve and keep meaningful devolution. At least that's what Thomas Jefferson thought.

—*Theodore B. Hannon*
Kailua, Hawaii

Mr. Winchell Replies:

I fear that Mr. Hannon's reading of my article is filled with enough straw men to populate Kansas. As a card-carrying, dues-paying member of the Libertarian Party, I share his concern about "big government bashing down the door and looting the cupboard." In fact, I clearly stated that the biggest mistake made by the Agrarians and Distributists was to think that they could trust the federal government to fight their battles without paying an unacceptable price in personal freedom and local sovereignty.

What is at issue in Clemson is not whether property rights should be respected but *whose property rights* should prevail. Why should the right of a single property owner to turn a profit by selling his land to Wal-Mart take precedence over the right of his neighbors to use their property in accordance with existing zoning laws? Chicago attorney Richard Kuntz has called my attention to the common law of nuisance. This principle prohibits an offensive land use that would interfere with the "quiet enjoyment" of an established landowner. Although this principle has been considerably eroded since the Industrial Revolution, it is one that conservatives can and should defend.

One need not harbor an irrational prejudice against big business to realize that capitalists are not gods but fallen human beings capable of bad behavior. When they do act badly, it is incumbent upon defenders of the market to call them to task.

While I agree that federal regulation has gotten out of hand, the right of local communities to preserve an established way of life is a principle worth defending. On this point, the Agrarians and Distributists are more reliably conservative than the Business Round Table.

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SUPER BOWL XXXVI, proclaimed by the National Football League to be a tribute to September 11 (themed "Heroes, Hope, and Homeland") underscored the fact that there is something inauthentic about a spectacle that allows sports-bar patrons to experience masculinity vicariously by watching well-padded millionaires smash into one another for control of a leather ball.

The Fox Television Network, which had exclusive rights to broadcast the game, had promised "the most stirring, patriotic and emotionally charged Super Bowl ever." Indeed, it proved to be a wartime pep rally, with spots made by players saluting the troops, satellite images from Afghanistan, and delegations representing police and fire departments as well as the Armed Forces. And while Irish rock band U2 won the prize for most testosterone-filled act—notwithstanding the irreverent spectacle of fans wildly cheering lead singer Bono, leather jacket lined with Old Glory, preening beneath the names of those killed by the terrorist attacks projected onto a giant bedsheet—the pregame show won the prize for most patriotic.

The pregame show was a film in two parts, with ex-NFL stars reciting excerpts from the Declaration of Independence, and the former living presidents (Nancy Reagan filled in for her ailing husband) celebrating Abraham Lincoln in his own words.

The announcer began the show with the question, "Just what is the cornerstone of . . . the much-envied American way of life?" The answer, he replied, is "the Declaration of Independence, which guarantees every individual life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." Actually, the Declaration—a political act, not a legal charter—does no such thing. It is the Constitution's Bill of Rights that guarantees our rights under the banner of "life, liberty, and property," the "pursuit of happiness" being a flowery phrase that withers under examination: What makes one person happy might constitute a criminal act.

The first part opened in Independence Hall with actors depicting several Founding Fathers reciting famous lines. It then shifted to ex-NFL stars reciting the Declaration's more stirring passages. Included in the roster were ex-Buffalo Bills quarterback Jack Kemp, speaking from the Capitol's rotunda, and ex-Seattle Seahawks quarterback Steve Largent, now a Republican Congressman from Oklahoma, who spoke from a Western art gallery before a bronze of an Indian war chief. All of this was accompanied by a martial score by John Williams, heavy on the horns and drums.

Lest anyone miss the theme of multicultural unity, the line "all men are created equal" was repeated three times, ending with a group shot of people who looked as if they were swept from the waiting room of an INS office, including an Arab Muslim wearing a white head wrap. This theme was reinforced when a stern-looking black soldier recited the line "It is their duty to throw off the old government and provide a new future of security," flanked by four other diverse but unrepresentative soldiers: two men (white and black) and two women (white and Asian).

The first part closed at the Jefferson Memorial, which is inscribed with several quotes, including "I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just; that His justice cannot sleep forever." But reciting that would have seemed darkly incongruous, so another was chosen in praise of a uniform American identity.

To the grave tune of Aaron Copland's "A Lincoln Portrait," part two celebrated Lincoln, that "gaunt figure striding across the American political and philosophical landscape like a Colossus" whose "patriotic philosophy is especially apt right now."

The former presidents and Mrs. Reagan quoted Lincoln expounding on the virtues of democracy and equality and the need to reject "the dogmas of a quiet past [that are] inadequate to a stormy present." Images of pastoral America bathed in the setting sun—a mountain lake, a windmill in a golden field of corn—clashed with such martial shots as the Vietnam War Memorial, the flag raising on Iwo Jima, and, of course, the crumbling World Trade Center Towers. The message was clear: Retribution against terrorists will help us recover an idyllic America.

While the pregame show lived up to Fox's claim of the most patriotic Super Bowl ever, it should not be forgotten that selectively chosen words divorced from their historical context and glorified with powerful and pleasing images and music are the stuff of propaganda. Details that would have sullied the nationalistic triumphalism were excluded, such as Lincoln's vow to win the Civil War "whether it meant freeing all the slaves or none of them" and his well-documented belief in the inequality of blacks—not to mention his prosecution of a bloody and unconstitutional war that allowed the federal government to become the colossus it is today. But a great nation needs heroes to enshrine in marble temples and worship in time of war, even if their mythic stature ignores their weaker human natures.

No mere words could better illustrate the pregame show's sentimental idealism than what immediately followed: the singing of "America the Beautiful." To continue the Capra-esque theme, I had hoped for a wholesome singer like Kate Smith, of whom Franklin D. Roosevelt declared, "She is America."

Instead, the 180 million viewers worldwide were subjected to the combined caterwauling of a skankily dressed woman (singer Mary J. Blige) with bulging breasts and a bare arm showing a tattoo of a cross, and a slinky girly boy in sunglasses (Latino pop star Marc Anthony). The illusion of Norman Rockwell's America ended with the rude introduction of America the unbeautiful.

—Matthew Rarey

AFTER SEPTEMBER 11, several important stories continue to be ignored. Here, to a lay observer, is the shape of the past fall's most overlooked developments.

The two biggest sponsors of terrorism in the Middle East are Saudi Arabia and Pakistan. The intelligence community has known this for years. The recent kidnapping and slaying of a *Wall Street Journal* reporter is only the most recent incident.

Our bombing campaign against Afghanistan was not really a "war on terrorism." Afghanistan ("Pipeline-istan") is basically a big vacant lot, not formally recognized as a nation by the U.S. government, dominated by squabblers with guns; its training camps and similar operations were founded, staffed, and financed by Saudi Arabia and Pakistan,

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our instant partners in the "war against terror." Afghanistan's Taliban government was also established and supported by Pakistanis, including Pakistan's secret service, with Saudi (and CIA) money.

The fourth hijacked plane on September 11, brought down in Pennsylvania by passengers who realized that it was headed for a target somewhere, was headed for the Pentagon. For years, as reported in the international press—including Arabic newspapers available in translation—hijackings and rocket attacks have come in pairs; the attackers struck in paired planes in New York City, and they intended to do so in Washington, D.C.

After spending a trillion dollars and opening the fiscal dam for anything deemed "defense," our military did not realize that the Pentagon could be a target. Is anyone asking why the airspace over the Pentagon was not defended?

Those anthrax letters were sent by someone without a scientific background who possessed both samples and a grudge—probably some military-installation employee who received the anthrax vaccine and didn't appreciate it. Forget about looking for Dr. No. The person who mailed these letters did not realize that finely milled anthrax could leak through ordinary stationery; this nonscientist became discouraged and quit when his infectious letters leaked on the wrong targets.

The investigation of the September attacks and the anthrax mailings has been coordinated at the national level directly from the White House, not the FBI. White House operatives are good at what they do—manipulating the press, opinion polls, members of Congress, and judges—but they are not trained investigators. This is one reason why the anthrax mailer, the Taliban's Mullah Omar, and Osama bin Laden have not been found.

Osama bin Laden, by the way, is dead. No one bounces back from renal shutdown, and all indications are that, if he were alive, we would be hearing from him. This is common knowledge in Pakistan (which supported bin Laden and the Taliban). Here, it was fed to the supermarket tabloids. Osama bin Laden did not "mastermind" the September attacks. He was not a mastermind and was never treated as such by any Arab writer, even those who supported the military strikes against Afghanistan; his supposed "nuclear weapons" documents turned out to be a well-known internet hoax.

The attacks were half-baked as well as vicious, but they were neither random nor "symbolic." A bunch of young Saudi (mostly) wannabe professionals went for broke trying to knock out the U.S. stock market and the Pentagon. It might be more appropriate to call the anthrax mailings "symbolic," since they were mailed to addressees apparently in the delusion that they would target senators and newscasters individually. But news reports do not customarily treat homegrown terrorist attacks as "symbolism," though they routinely react to anything of Oriental or Middle Eastern origin as florid and incomprehensible.

The attacks of September 11 were supported, passively and otherwise, by the secret services of our allies. Terrorist operations in the Middle East and Europe for years have been permitted or supported or carried out by the secret service of Pakistan, the Gulf states, Russia, and Israel.

Two sources for the brownshirt phrase "Homeland Security" seem to be the Anser Institute for Homeland Security, in Northern Virginia, and the Reverend-Moon-sponsored *Insight* magazine. The Anser Institute—a non-profit, despite its patents and its large government contracts—and *Insight* were touting "Homeland Security" and making reference to a "second Pearl Harbor" before September 11.

The attacks of September 11 were not an "act of war"; they were a mass crime. Calling them "acts of war" gives them undeserved dignity; calling them "crimes"—or, as the United Nations refers to them, a "breach of security"—would enable investigation.

We are not at war. If we were at war, those long *Washington Post* articles showing the innermost workings of the White House and the CIA in crisis would also be security breaches.

Still, it can be said that, amidst all our current problems, there are some bright spots—especially President Bush's public support for a Palestinian state. It is high time; the establishment of a Palestinian state is in this nation's and the world's best interest.

—*Margie Burns*

DARTMOUTH MEDICAL SCHOOL has published the results of research concerning parental influence upon children's behavior in the journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics. Lo and behold: Parents' "preaching" works! Their lectures have a "positive impact" on teenage behaviors such as smoking and drug use—even when parents themselves engage in such activities.

Similar findings are cited by the National Institute on Drug Abuse and the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, among others. Analysts even go so far as to say that straightforward messages and high expectations of parents actually blunt the effects of peer pressure.

"We overrate the rebelliousness of teenagers. . . . Parents underestimate their influence on their children," reported Dr. James Sargent, associate professor of pediatrics at Dartmouth Medical School. "[Parents] have an overly heightened concern about coming down hard on their kids."

Well, of *course* they do. After 40 years of being inundated with admonitions from child psychologists against "preaching" ("kids won't listen"), about children being "decisionmakers" ("let them discover their own values"), and citing the disadvantages of moralizing ("teens will do it anyway"), parents have concluded their wisdom is more destructive than helpful. Heaven help the parent who says "no" to peer activities deemed inconsistent with his youngster's maturity level. Overprotective, you see . . .

For four decades, parents have been treated as well-intentioned nincompoops lacking behavioral-science degrees; now, suddenly, they are supposed to exercise their prerogatives, set standards, and administer "tough love."

Did you happen to catch the new public service ads on TV by the Drug-Free Schools bunch? A prepubescent youngster tells adult viewers: "I'm going to fight you. In a few years you won't even know me. *You* have to be the adult." I bet our grandparents wouldn't have heard such talk in their day.

Since the 1950's, when child "experts" started floating malarkey in women's magazines, parents have gotten nothing but raspberries for exercising common sense. When I was an education major, my professor in educational psychology told us outright that "there's no such thing as common sense."

Today, school counselors are still intimidating parents who exercise adult judgment. And they can do a whole lot more than deliver verbal raspberries. They can take children away from good homes through Child Protective Service agencies, require genital exams for 11-year-olds on school property, and instigate lawsuits on a child's behalf if discipli-

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nary measures are deemed "excessive." Any credentialed teacher or counselor has more legal influence than a child's family.

It is small wonder that parents live in fear, not only of their own children, but of school authorities and social workers. Almost anything can trigger a knock on the door by agents of the state serving up frivolous accusations of child abuse—which are never purged from permanent records even when a parent is exonerated. Parents spend precious hours countering baseless charges and thwarting reckless school activities that undercut their values.

Peruse any bookstore; what do you see? Shelves of "parenting" (not *child-rearing*) books, spouting mostly hogwash, by "experts" sporting Ph.D.s. The latest revelation? From the American Psychological Association: Adult-child sex is not harmful if it is consensual.

This wisdom, however, doesn't exactly square with the mission of colleagues in the social-work industry who aggressively incite charges of child sexual abuse. They get schools to disseminate provocative questionnaires, scrutinize students' "personal journals" (read: diaries), and pass off encounter sessions as substantive curriculum—all to ferret out anything that might be construed as sexual abuse.

Ironically, the "Me Generation" is the primary recipient of the news flash from Dartmouth Medical School. As first-wave products of experts' asinine advice, we might well wonder how many of our progeny would have been spared addiction, unwanted pregnancies, AIDS, and criminal records had we been the adults our grandparents were, folks who demonstrated the courage of their convictions.

Meanwhile, the mental-health industry is busy concocting new "diseases," hawking psychiatric drugs and behavioral-screening instruments, and rushing to the scene of every tragedy with mandates for mental-health counseling. Psychologists are now fixtures in the schools, the courts, the workplace, even many churches, intimidating these institutions to buy their wares.

What does society have to show for this crusade against parental authority? Classrooms filled with out-of-control, disrespectful, and dangerous kids; hordes of "rehabilitated" killers scouting neighborhoods for more victims; babies tossed in dumpsters; epidemic sexual diseases; roving gangs of fatherless children.

Now Dartmouth tells us that parents have clout. Gee, thanks for nothing.

—*B.K. Eakman*

"AMERICA HAS CHANGED" has been the media's new mantra since September 11. But what has America changed *into?* Reporters have fanned out across the country seeking those changes, and they have filled the airwaves and pages with their findings. Some who have been interviewed talked in the abstract about how they do not take as much for granted now. Others say they have become more spiritual; still others claim they have drawn closer to their loved ones. Many have remarked on the swelling patriotism within the country and how unified we all seem.

Whether or not America will truly "change" is a question to be answered in years rather than news cycles. But an AP story written by Ron Kampeas may show that the media is simply indulging in wishful thinking.

Americans are not joining the military in increased numbers, according to the Pentagon; nor are more of them going to church—unless you count mosques. Laura Bush told a group of New York women that "Divorce cases have been withdrawn at higher rates and more people are buying engagement rings and planning weddings." But in Reno, Nevada, the "Marriage Capital of the World," there has been an 11-percent drop in marriage-license applications since September 11. Murder and theft have increased in Washington, D.C., and Denver. An alleged post-September 11 baby boom, Kampeas argues, is just an "urban myth." According to a survey by advertising network Euro RSCG, 36 percent of American women who have dogs are spending more time with them after September 11. Only 20 percent are spending more time with their husbands.

September 11 could have caused this country to change, because it was the kind of sudden event that often leads to shifts in historical and cultural currents. The first armed attack by foreigners upon the continental United States since the War of 1812 and the destruction of the country's two largest buildings, right in the heart of its financial district, should have caused people to stop what they are doing, look at themselves, and look at their country. Such a horrible event could have caused the citizenry to demand of our elected leaders different policies on immigration, abortion, and America's role in the world, and should have caused us to realize the effects of U.S. foreign-policy decisions and to rethink a government so big that it couldn't prevent 22 terrorists from slipping into our country unnoticed and hijacking four planes to use as missiles. It could have caused the public to take a hard look at this country's institutions and ask if they are worthy enough to pursue justice for the deaths of so many innocents—and if not, how they could be reformed to be so.

But before that could happen, President Bush told the citizenry that he wanted their lives to return to normal, and the media joined in his efforts. It became our patriotic duty to "go back to normal." The terrorists would win if we didn't become "normal" again. So how can we have changed if everything went back to normal? Your guess is a good as mine, but it seems that the public took the President's words to heart. And normal before September 11 was divorce, abortion, birth out of wedlock, political correctness, illegal immigration, multiculturalism, murder, empty pews, drug abuse, an overstretched military, corruption, casinos, Enron ripping off its stockholders, the United Nations, Howard Stern, Britney Spears exhibitions, 500 channels, ESPN, Wal-Mart, and *The Jerry Springer Show*. If President Bush was so eager for the country to return to normal, he obviously didn't find much wrong with it before September 11.

Don't expect the subsequent war on terrorism to change much in America, either, unless it turns into an utter disaster. Once upon a time, the nation literally *did* go to war. Millions were mobilized into the Armed Forces, millions more went to work in defense plants, and millions more had their food and gasoline rationed, bought war bonds, saw sporting events cancelled, gave up luxuries and travel, and participated in civil defense. Scientists, businessmen, lawyers, journalists, celebrities, and plowmen all played their parts in the war effort. Such mass mobilization of the American people was bound to affect culture and values in any number of ways—perhaps mainly for ill. We would not have had a civil-rights movement without World War II; we would not have had astroturf without the Korean War; and Muhammad Ali would have been just another heavyweight boxer without Vietnam.

Since Vietnam, we have left war to the professionals. While the results have

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been officially positive (we haven't been defeated since), wars have lost whatever cultural meaning they once had. An all-volunteer force means that most Americans will not have to worry about the loss of a loved one in battle; they can just follow the war from their TV sets or computers as if they were watching a sporting event: the United States *versus* the Taliban (or Somalia, or Iraq, or Shangri-la, if it happens to harbor terrorists). Most Americans will not have to worry about all the disruptions wartime caused for previous generations, unless some fanatic decides to detonate a nuclear warhead in downtown Chicago.

We no longer even *declare* war. Our elected representatives in Congress just pass a resolution in support of the President's policy and then go back to their main interest of dividing the take. It's a nice little technicality that allows us to avoid the Geneva Convention when we're dealing with Taliban prisoners. Lebanon, Grenada, Libya, Panama, the Persian Gulf, Haiti, Bosnia, Kosovo, Somalia—all of these resemble the colonial campaigns and conquests of the British Empire more than they do the wars of a republic. Maybe that's the idea after all—the British colonial forces were all volunteer, too.

Reflecting on the Gulf War, I remember that patriotism was strong. People flew flags everywhere, tied yellow ribbons around trees, held parades for our returning heroes, and sang songs. Some earnestly hoped that America would be changed by the experience and become a better country. Two years later, Bill Clinton was elected President.

Change doesn't happen in a vacuum, nor does it happen just because we wish it. It happens when men are willing and when they know what they want to become. So far, the real winner of this "war" has been the *status quo*.

—*Sean Scallon*

OBITER DICTA: In George Carey's review "A Conservative in Crisis" (March), we mistakenly altered the title of the collection of articles by Francis Graham Wilson, which should have read *Political Philosophy and Cultural Renewal: Collected Essays*. We also omitted Professor Carey's listing of the editors: **H. Lee Cheek, Jr.**, **M. Susan Power**, and **Kathy B. Cheek**. We regret the error and the omission.

Our poet this month is **Alfred Nicol**. His poetry will be included in an anthology titled *Contemporary Poets of New England*, edited by Robert Pack and Jay Parini. His work has appeared in the *New England Review*, *Atlanta Review*, the *Formalist*, *Rattapallax*, *Pivot*, and *Commonweal*. A member of the Powow River Poets, he lives in Amesbury, Massachusetts, where he teaches poetry and creative writing at Sparhawk School.

Chronicles is illustrated this month by St. Petersburg native **Anatol Woolf**, who, in addition to freelance work, has designed sets for theaters in Russia and provided illustrations for St. Petersburg Textbook Publishers. Since coming to America in 1987, Mr. Woolf has been a frequent contributing artist to *Chronicles*, as well as to the *Washington Post*, the *Washington Times*, *Policy Review*, *National Geographic Traveler*, *Legal Times*, and *Cricket*. Mr. Woolf works with a variety of materials, from watercolors to pencil to acrylic. Further samples of his work are available on his Web page: *www.netcom.com/~a.woolf/*.

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by Thomas Fleming

Recessional

If drunk with sight of power, we
loose
Wild tongues that have not Thee in
awe,
Such boastings as the Gentiles use,
Or lesser breeds without the Law—

George W. Bush's "axis of evil" address was a remarkable performance in many ways: It simultaneously marked the zenith of American triumphalism and the nadir, not only of presidential speechwriting, but of U.S. pronouncements on foreign policy. That otherwise intelligent men in the Cabinet allowed this farce to be performed is a very disturbing indication of the depths of cynicism to which our leaders have descended. I had thought Albright and Clinton had reached rock bottom, but I was wrong.

One of the minor annoyances of growing old in a dying civilization is that we are constantly aware of how rapidly downhill everything is headed. Even the conversation about civilizations and empires, their rise and fall, their conflicts, has become steadily more stupid. In our grandfathers' days, people were talking about Nietzsche and Spengler, and taking up the white man's burden was the theme of speeches by Teddy Roosevelt and Winston Churchill and poems by Rudyard Kipling; now we are reduced to Benjamin Barber and Samuel Huntington and the editorialists of the *Wall Street Journal*. Even as a raving maniac, Nietzsche was a product of [our civilization] (I put it in brackets because I have not yet said what I mean by it). What is Mr. Huntington but George F. Babbit with a Ph.D.? He is but one in that long series of American "exceptionalist" gurus whose wisdom consists of saying what everyone has already been taught to believe.

We all learned the story from fifth-grade world history and ninth-grade civics. In the beginning, all was darkness, except for some little pockets of organized life in China, India, and the eastern Mediterranean. Then light broke upon the Aegean Sea, and the Greeks discovered democracy and the worth of the individual. The light was almost extinguished by Christian superstition but began to shine all the brighter in the Renaissance and Reformation, bursting into flame during the Enlightenment, which culminated in the American and French Revolutions, and, since then, Americans (and their European followers) have marched unswervingly in their progress toward Huntington's "liberty, equality, individualism, democracy, rule of law, private enterprise"—to say nothing of free abortions, jacuzzis in every Holiday Inn, international human rights, gourmet food you can heat up in the microwave, fresh Mexican fruit from a market run by illegal Korean aliens, freedom from religions that claim to possess the truth . . .

Brekekekex ko-ax ko-ax

If you want to suck up more of this pap, read John Dewey, watch Jim Lehrer or Wolf Blitzer, subscribe to *Foreign Affairs* or the *Public Interest*, but throw this magazine away. We did not invent civilization; we inherited it. And, so far from improving upon our inheritance, we have proved ourselves unworthy of it. Civilization, and hence the clash of civilizations, began with the Greeks.

As curious as they were about other cultures, the Greeks divided the world between Greeks and "the others," whom they referred to as *barbaroi*, a word that may be an onomatopoetic rendering of foreign babble. Although the term "barbarian" certainly included such wild peoples of the North as Illyrians and Scyths, it was more typically applied to the degenerate subjects of the great empires of the East, especially the Persians.

Herodotus, who was the first extant writer to have taken up the conflict between the two civilizations of the Mediterranean, spent a fair amount of time hopping from island to island, roaming through Egypt, and living among the barbarians. The results of his casual investigations (or "histories," as he called them) form the most entertaining (and perhaps even the most honest) work of history every written. As a Greek, Herodotus had no doubts about the superiority of his own civilization, but he had grown up cheek-by-jowl with Carian *barbaroi*, and he was fully aware of the splendid virtues of the Persians and of the cultural antiquity of the Egyptians. His openness to alien cultures extended to the point of gullibility, since he appears to have uncritically accepted nearly every preposterous story told to him by Egyptian priests.

Greek history, according to Herodotus, is the story of conflicts between East and West. Making the best sense he can of myths and legends, he concludes that women are at the bottom of the East-West feud. Phoenicians began the struggle by stealing the king of Argos' daughter; Greeks later retaliated by abducting Europa and compounded the crime when the Argonauts ran off with Medea. Priam's son Alexander (Paris) was only seeking revenge when he seduced Helen and started the Trojan War. This is the Persian view, he assures us, and the Persians, in attacking the Greeks, were only retaliating against earlier aggressions.

Even in this silly preface to his work—parodied brilliantly by Aristophanes—Herodotus reveals what he is all about. Although his theme is the triumph of the Greeks in the wars against Persia, he insists upon listening to the Persian version, which puts the blame on the Greeks. Although he understands the importance of trade and commerce—that is what, after all, these Greeks, Phoenicians, and Trojans were doing when they were not stealing each others' women—he is also aware of the significance of irrational attachments, both sexual passion and national myths.

Herodotus is no multiculturalist, but he finds barbarians fascinating, whether they are Scythians, who get stoned dancing around a bonfire of hemp plants; or Egyptian princesses working as temple prostitutes; or power-crazed Persian tyrants like Cambyses, who killed the priests of Apis when a sacrifice went wrong and went on to murder his brother and sister; or Xerxes, who, when a bridge collapsed in a storm, killed the architects and scourged the sea for interfering in the Great King's plans.

The Greeks he portrays are not necessarily braver or nobler than the Persian aristocracy, but they are different. Greeks had the normal human desire for wealth and fear of poverty, but in their private lives, they lived in modesty and restraint,

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fearful of the envy both of their neighbors and of their gods. We can see how they spent their wealth by going to the British Museum or wandering through the ruins of even a remote colonial town like Paestum. Barbarians, on the other hand, whether wild like the Scyths or degenerate like the Persians, were ostentatious in their gaudy displays. If they had it, they flaunted it—the clothes they wore, the food they ate, the dishes they ate off. Greeks were not immune to the temptation, as the career of Alcibiades makes clear, but making a display of yourself was not the best route to popularity. A passionate and headstrong people, Greeks prized—above all—the virtue of *sophrosyne*, which means something like temperance and self-restraint, the ability to keep your wits about you and resist the temptation to go too far.

Though Greeks may spend their lives scheming for power, they either display restraint (like the king of Sparta, who thought the Persians were too far away to worry about) or suffer the consequences of their arrogance. Polycrates, the tyrant of Samos, spent far too much time intriguing with barbarians. At the height of his power and wealth, he was advised by the king of Egypt to sacrifice something of value in order to limit his dangerous run of good luck. As a Greek, Polycrates understood the power of what they called "divine envy" and cast a valuable golden ring into the sea. When the ring is found in the belly of a fish presented to Polycrates as a gift, the reader knows that his number is up, and that he will die a miserable death.

Although Greek political leaders might dream of expanding their territory, they rarely succeeded, and down to Herodotus' death and after, Greeks remained intensely local and provincial, even during the period (the fourth century) when their culture was conquering the known world. Herodotus paints the contrast between the barbarians, with their universal empire, and the Greeks in vivid colors. Xerxes' vast expedition includes virtually every subject race, and when the Greeks block them at the pass of the Thermopylae, the Spartans dismiss most of their allies and die to the last man. At first, Xerxes is contemptuous of the little Spartan band, but he is told that these are men who put everything into athletic competitions where the prize is a worthless crown of leaves.

The Persians themselves are brave soldiers, but no Persian is free except the Great King himself; soldiers from subject nations are whipped into battles to extend the power and glory of the empire; Greeks (in Aeschylus's firsthand description of Salamis) go to meet death to save their families and the temples of their gods. When the Persians did seize Athens, they burnt the temples on the Acropolis. It is not that Greeks never burnt temples—or never robbed or murdered—but they knew it was terribly wrong. Aeschylus' Agamemnon sacrifices his daughter and burns temples, and in the mind of the poet, the two crimes are related.

Since the Enlightenment, the ancient Greeks have been portrayed as abstract philosophers forever meditating on universal truths. In fact, they were almost completely wrapped up in the ties of kinship and local community. Aristotle wondered if a man could be said to be happy if he had lived a successful life and died with his family and city flourishing but, after his death, his family and city were ruined. It might seem reasonable to call such a man happy, but Aristotle thought it went against common sense.

This is the meaning behind Herodotus' still-famous tale of Solon and Croesus. The Greek philosopher was visiting the fabulously wealthy Lydian king, who asked him to name the happiest man on earth. Solon tells him of an Athenian who lived well, produced a good family, and died fighting for his people. When Croesus, a little crestfallen, asks him if there is a close second, Solon tells him the true story of Cleobis and Biton, who, when they could not find the oxen to yoke to the cart, died after pulling their mother to a festival of Argive Hera. "Well, what about me?" Croesus complains, and Solon delivers his homily on the vicissitudes of human life. Wealth is, of course, a blessing to a man, especially if he also has good health and fine children. Such a man might be regarded as happy, but until he dies, he can only be described as fortunate. Croesus learns the truth of Solon's wisdom when his one son who might succeed him (the other is a mute) is accidentally killed and when, later, he is conquered by the Persians. Herodotus' conception of happiness—a convention among the Greeks—is familial and communal, not individualistic.

The Greeks themselves eventually fell into decay, and some of them began to embrace weird universalist creeds, such as Stoicism and Epicureanism, that taught them to despise the lesser attachments that had been the basis of their civilization; but they passed on their cultural legacy to the Romans and to us, the heirs of both the Greeks and Romans. When, in the pages of this magazine, we refer to "Christendom," it is to that essentially Greek civilization that was disciplined by Roman law and leavened with the Holy Spirit that Our Lord sent to comfort us and teach us to comfort one another. Christendom, for 1,300 years, has been in conflict with the Islamic world, which is the successor to the ancient Assyrians and Persians, but today it is a one-sided war: Without a civilization, how can there be a clash?

North America (with the possible exception of parts of Mexico) is no longer a civilized place. Any doubts on that score have been settled over the past six months by the strutting, boasting, drooling "patriots" who are rushing forward to burn whatever shreds of liberty and fig leaves of decency they had upon the altar of national security.

In transforming the United States into an empire, the rulers of this country have accepted the logic that, if localism, restraint, and self-government are Hellenic, then it is time to side with the barbarians—not the wholesome, red-blooded barbarians of Northern Europe, but the Babylonians and Assyrians. When our leaders talk to the press, the language is that of Xerxes, not Leonidas and Themistocles. We are better because we are bigger; we see farther; we have transcended all those petty loyalties of blood and soil; we are building a global order, and Walt Whitman's "barbaric yawp" of a young democracy has been translated into imperial boasting that threatens the world with war on three fronts.

> For heathen heart that puts her
> trust
> In reeking tube and iron shard—
> All valiant dust that builds on dust,
> And guarding, calls not Thee to
> guard.
> For frantic boast and foolish
> word—
> Thy Mercy on thy People, Lord!

A Greek at Salamis was fighting for "the ashes of his fathers and the temples of his gods." When the battle was over, he hoped to return to his little hamlet in Attica and grow old with his one wife, taking care of his vines and olive trees as if they were invalid children. He knew

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every inch of his property, and the boundaries of his world were defined by his local *deme* and—at its broadest—by the territory of Attica, hardly bigger than an American county. Xerxes thought in bigger terms: a harem filled with enough women to content a U.S. congressman for several years, a multicultural empire that included all the peoples of the eastern Mediterranean. To signal his contempt for the traditional distinction between East and West, he built a bridge across the Hellespont, and though Persians revered water as divine, he scourged the Hellespont for having the presumption to destroy the bridge even though his lord and master had done the sea no harm.

We have become the multicultural empire with troops stationed around the world, ruled by a promiscuous elite class that looks upon all religions with equal contempt and refuses to listen when the grumbling masses of the East complain against the masters who have bridged not just the Hellespont but every sea and ocean of the globe. And we think that we are not only the first, but the last—that our power never ends.

Kipling the imperialist knew better. The only conceivable justification for empire is the benefits that are conferred upon the subjects. The Romans could make this claim, and so could the British in North America. British India, which Kipling knew and loved, was a more doubtful case, though even there, at least by Kipling's time, many sober and industrious British officials were doing their duty under difficult circumstances. But imperial nations that put their trust in reeking missile launchers and cluster-bombs enriched with depleted uranium, Kipling prophesied, await the same fate that overtook the barbarian empires of the East.

> Far-called, our navies melt away;
> On dune and headland sinks the fire;
> Lo, all our pomp of yesterday
> Is one with Nineveh and Tyre.
>
> Lest we forget . . .

c

Ballade: The Great Fear of 1789

Alfred Nicol

How many! zealous to enlist,
Beneath the panicked bells are massed,
With gun and pitchfork, scythe and fist;
The reeling circle of the vast
Unconscious sky is overcast
With human energies, that thrust
Their gathered force into one blast.
All falls together as it must.

In faith, the sated catechist
Is fervent to repent and fast:
They've seized monseigneur by the wrist
To interrupt his noon repast.
"Now make the best of what thou hast,
Although it be a meager crust.
Indeed, the first shall be the last."
All falls together as it must.

Ah! here's an unexpected tryst—
The chatelaine, with eyes downcast.
"See here, François, she won't be kissed!"
The boy, though drawing back, aghast,
Relents, relentlessly harassed.
For terror, that consummate lust,
Compels the gentlest, most shamefast.
All falls together as it must.

Take comfort, young iconoclast.
A soft and steady rain of dust
Will muffle what is—soon!—the past.
All falls together as it must.

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by Joe Sobran

Chesterton and the Gentile Problem

In 1961, Garry Wills published his first book, a penetrating study of G.K. Chesterton. It wasn't a huge success, and it soon went out of print. Later, after swinging fashionably leftward, Wills would write best-sellers and Pulitzer Prize-winners.

Now his *Chesterton* has been reissued, slightly revised, in paperback. In a new introduction, Wills apologizes for the original book's shortcomings—first among which he names his failure to deal sternly with Chesterton's antisemitism.

As far as I know, nobody in 1961 found this to be a fault of the book. Only later would imputed "antisemitism" become the defining trait, in the minds of liberal literati, of Chesterton and his friend Hilaire Belloc. Both men, in fact, regarded "the Jewish problem" as real and serious, and both tried to be fair to the Jews in their proposed solutions. Chesterton was a Zionist; Belloc devoted much of his book on the Jews to refuting common charges of Jewish avarice, cowardice, disloyalty, and so forth.

In 1961, it was still assumed that there could be a legitimate range of opinion on ethnic issues. "Minorities" hadn't yet become a synonym for "victims." So Wills is apologizing, in effect, for not having worn today's fashions 40 years ago. And he now agrees to censure Chesterton for not having worn them over a generation earlier.

In any case, nobody familiar with Chesterton's writings has ever supposed that his scattered remarks about the Jews are central to his work. In fact, it takes some effort to track them down in the hundred books that bear his name. You may think them wrong; you may judge them unfair; you may find them baffling. I am not sure what he means by "the money methods of the Jews": Is it wrong for a group so small in numbers to use wealth as its sword and shield?

Be that as it may, Chesterton and Belloc, like most men of their time, took for granted that there was a fundamental, even tragic incompatibility between Jews and Christians. This view was shared by many Jews, including the founder of Zionism, Theodore Herzl, whose opinions about his fellow Jews would now be condemned as antisemitic.

So Chesterton could assume that it was perfectly legitimate to think and speak critically of the Jews, in the same way that he could think and speak critically of England. For him, to criticize a thing was not to denigrate it or to condemn it out of hand but to take its measure, to try to see it in proportion and in its true relation to other things.

This is precisely where he runs up against the unacknowledged Jewish problem of today. Far from solving the old Jewish problem, Zionism has aggravated it in myriad ways. Herzl's generation hoped for a peaceful migration of all Jews to a territory of their own, where they might live normally like the other nations of the earth; it has proved otherwise. Half a century after coming into existence, the state of Israel remains in tension, often at war, with its Arab neighbors. Meanwhile, the Diaspora Jews, who prefer to remain in their native lands while supporting Israel from afar, complicate the situation further. Though the Jewish "homeland" was supposed to provide a safe haven from persecution, today it's the Diaspora Jews who have to worry about Israel's survival in a hostile region. Belloc foresaw all this; Chesterton did not.

The new Jewish problem is a fusion of Jewish power and Jewish ethnocentrism. An unassimilated core of the American Jewish population, "liberal" and "neoconservative," insists on the primacy of its own interests, especially Israel. It equates even rational criticism of these interests with embryonic hostility and persecution—"antisemitism." Jewish self-criticism is called "self-hatred." Objectivity itself, a core principle of Western culture, has become taboo.

Since ancient Greece, Western man has been measuring all things, even himself, seeking proportion and order. We define, compare, classify, compute, codify, set limits. These things have become second nature to us, and we forget how small a part they play in the lives of most other cultures, where ritual, tradition, combat, divination, magic, and sheer self-assertion may have primacy over reason.

Measure begets humility. We learn our subordinate place in the order of things and we accept it. To forget or defy our limits is the sin of hubris, dramatized in tragedy from Athens to the Renaissance.

This is not to say that hubris has been absent from Western life; it is recurrent and sometimes incurable, and it is at least as apt to afflict a whole nation as an individual. Men who are individually humble may have an outsized group ego. At the moment, I believe both Jews and Americans generally are exhibiting all the symptoms of hubris.

What is remarkable, though, is the way gentiles now cater to Jewish hubris. The regnant attitude toward the Jews in America is not antisemitism but fear. As Christopher Hitchens has observed, public discussion of Jewish interests is now extremely "guarded." As in Stalin's Russia—though, of course, to a much lesser degree—public fawning masks a private dread; the fawning, however, is the measure of the dread. It has reached the point where the gentiles are eagerly finking on each other.

Wills' belated, even anachronistic rebuke of Chesterton is a tiny expression of the great dread. He is anticipating a charge of antisemitism-by-association. In 1961, he did not have to worry about it; by 2001, he did. It's a perfect illustration of a development I can only call the "Gentile Problem." c

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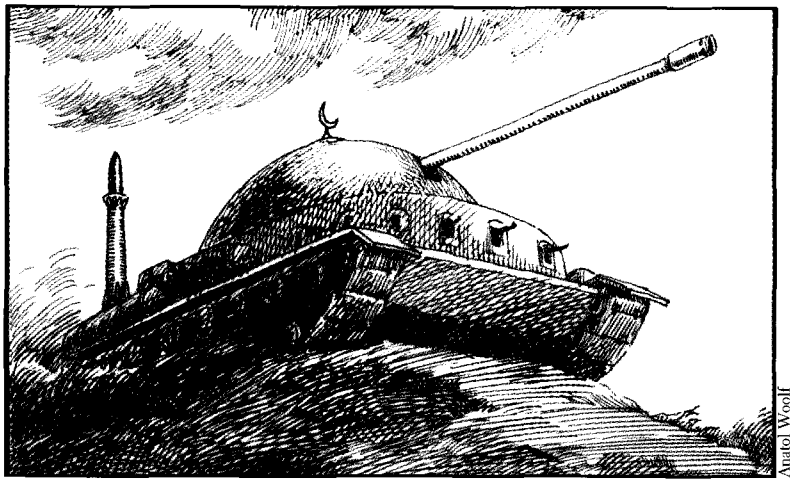
Two Trails of Blood

"The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church."
—Tertullian

by Harold O.J. Brown



The spread of Christianity was marked by a trail of blood, shed by myriad martyrs during the first three centuries of the Christian era. Another trail of blood followed: that of the Christian defenders of the Roman Empire, shed by Arabian Muslims in the course of their conquest of Syria, Palestine, Egypt, North Africa, and Spain. (A similar bloody path was left by the Arabs in the East, when they conquered and destroyed the Persian empire of the Sassanids, where Zoroastrianism was the accepted religion.) The martyrs of the Christian Church were put to death for their confession of faith in Jesus Christ. The Muslims of our day claim martyrdom, too, but their "martyrs" kill *themselves* in terrorist attacks against Israeli citizens and, on September 11, against Americans and others.

Why do we distinguish Christian and Muslim martyrs? Haven't Christians also killed for the Faith? What about the Crusades, the Jews and Muslims in Spain, and Cortés in Mexico? Christians have killed, sometimes atrociously, but there are fundamental distinctions, and it is essential not to overlook them. The Rev. Patrick Sookhdeo, a man of Pakistani descent who grew up a Muslim in Guyana before embracing Christianity, is now the director of the Institute for the Study of Islam and Christianity in London. In a talk given on January 13 in Fairfax County, Virginia, he stated, "In dealing with Islam, you have to tell the truth. And you have to meet it head on. It understands power and only power, and so you have to know how to exercise power."

The air campaign in Afghanistan, begun by the United States with incidental Allied assistance and coordinated with the rebel Afghan Northern Alliance and other anti-Taliban Afghans, has shown that we have power—at least enough to suppress an unpopular regime in a small country. But we have not shown that we know the truth and are willing to tell it. One thing is certainly true: Both Christianity and Islam spread rather rapidly, but by different means.

The difference in the means is suggested by the alacrity of the spread: Missionaries work more slowly than soldiers. From the beginning of Christian evangelism at Pentecost until the date when Christianity was spread throughout the Roman Empire and received toleration by the Emperor Constantine the Great (A.D. 313), over 250 years passed. Between the death of Muhammad in A.D. 632 and the Battle of Tours in northwest France, when the Muslim advance into Christian lands was finally stopped by Charles Martel, a century passed. In that century, Muslim control was extended over Syria, Palestine, Egypt, North Africa, Spain and the Roman-ruled part of Arabia, all once Christian lands (and, in addition, over the Persian empire in the East, which, unlike the Byzantine Empire, was totally crushed and disappeared from history).

Why did Muslim power spread so rapidly? Because of the use of the sword. Is Islam a religion of peace? There are certainly admonitions to peace in the Koran—as well as references to taking up the sword. The exhortations to wage war against non-Muslims are more explicit in the *Hadith*, the traditional interpretation of the Koran. One such statement reads: "O Allah! You know that there is nothing more beloved to me than to fight in your cause against those who disbelieved your Apostle and turned him out of Mecca." Many of the exhortations are somewhat ambiguous with respect to the context (like this one), but from the conduct of the Arabs and their successors, it is evident that they were interpreted as giving high praise to fighting against unbelievers. You will look in vain in the New Testament for exhortations to take up the sword against unbelief; the

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word "sword" itself occurs only rarely, and never in a context where evangelists or missionaries are exhorted to use it. In fact, in the Garden of Gethsemane, Christ told St. Peter to put his sword away.

Again, to tell the truth, the Christian Church was spread over the course of the centuries by nonviolent missionaries and evangelists, and the truth of the Gospel was attested over and over again by the martyrdom of those who let their blood be shed for it. Islam was spread by conquest. As the *Oxford History of Islam* points out, "The spread of the [Muslim] empire was carried out mainly by armies, the spread of the Islamic faith beyond the caliphate's border was usually the work of merchants and pious preachers . . . The main spreading of the Islamic community, however, took place within the caliphal empire itself."

During the first three centuries of Christian expansion, persecution became so common that Georges Florovsky, the eminent Orthodox theologian, could write that, in that era, martyrdom was the normal Christian life. At first, the harassment came at the hands of Jewish religious authorities and targeted only Hellenistic Christians. By A.D. 51 or 52, the emperor Claudius (41-54), took notice of the conflict between Jews and Christians and expelled both "sects" from Rome.

Although Christians suffered under Nero (54-68) and Domitian (81-96), Trajan (98-117), the first of the four "good emperors," formulated a policy that encouraged officials not to hunt Christians but to punish those who came to light and refused to abjure their allegiance to Christ. The fourth "good emperor," Marcus Aurelius, a stoic philosopher, continued the persecutions: During his reign, Justin Martyr, a philosopher converted to Christianity, and Polycarp, the bishop of Smyrna who had been taught by Saint John the apostle, were executed. Finally, religious tolerance came in A.D. 313 after the conversion of the emperor Constantine. After that, by and large, the blood of martyrs was no longer shed in the Roman Empire. The spread of Christianity continued, largely by missionary work, but sometimes by a prudential decision on the part of a local ruler. In 380, the emperor Theodosius made Christianity the state religion and gradually eliminated the older pagan ceremonies. Pagan concepts and institutions survived for several decades, yet pagans were not persecuted. Plato's Academy in Athens did not close until 529, the same year that St. Benedict established the monastery of Monte Cassino and the Benedictine order. By then, much of Europe had been overrun by the pagan Germans; the Roman armies retreated, but Christianity advanced. The conversion of the invading Goths had begun with the mission work of Ulfilas, a former slave, in the fourth century. The most powerful Germanic nation, the Franks, followed their king, Chlodovech (Clovis), converting to Christianity in A.D. 496. This was not a mere formal christening, for Clovis asked for the approval of the *Thing* (the assembly of army chiefs) and was required to study the comprehensive catechism of the early Church before receiving baptism.

The conversion of the Slavs was the work of missionaries, not warriors. The Slavic peoples of the south and east, who were filling up Greek territory depopulated by a plague, heard the Gospel not from Roman soldiers but from two Greek monks: Cyril and Methodius gave them the ancestor of today's Cyrillic alphabet and a liturgy in what is now known as Old Church Slavonic. The last of the European peoples to accept Christianity were the Lithuanians, converted in 1386 when their Grand Duke Jagilas married the Polish Queen Jadwiga and joined their two countries in a personal union. Thus the Church that sprang up where so many martyrs shed their blood continued to expand by missionary witness or by marriage, sometimes attested by martyrdom—as when Boniface, an Anglo-Saxon missionary to the still-pagan Germans, was killed by the Frisians in 754—and, occasionally, by force, as when Charlemagne, king of the Franks and the first Holy Roman emperor, compelled the Germans east of the Rhine to accept baptism.

The Christian Church was spread over the course of the centuries by nonviolent missionaries and evangelists, and the truth of the Gospel was attested over and over again by the martyrdom of those who let their blood be shed for it.

A dramatic change came in the 16th century when the Spanish *conquistadors*, some of them serious Catholics and interested in winning the Indians to Christ, first conquered them, plundered them, and in many cases made slaves of them, all in the context of bringing them the Gospel. But missionaries did not always follow conquerors. In the same century, Roman Catholic missionaries went to both Japan and China without being preceded or accompanied by military power. In subsequent centuries, Christian colonization in Africa and southern Asia was followed by missionary efforts, but the colonial powers did not push conversion and, in fact, often hindered the missions. Thus, by and large, the Christian Gospel was spread through missionary efforts, often at the cost of Christian blood, but rarely by shedding the blood of the unconverted.

Such was not the case with Islam. A map of Europe and the Near East in 630 shows that the entire Mediterranean shore, including Egypt, Asia Minor, Syria, and the northern part of the Arabian peninsula, belonged to the Christian Roman Empire. (Most of Mesopotamia and all of Persia, extending into modern Afghanistan, was Zoroastrian.) A century later, all of North Africa, most of Spain, and all of the Near East except for Byzantine Asia Minor—as well as all of Persia—were under Muslim rulers. In the century following the death of Muhammad, the Sassanid Empire of Persia was destroyed and the Byzantine Empire stripped of its African, Egyptian, and Syrian lands. Arab troops had reached Tours in northwest France before being defeated by Charles Martel. The Muslims had besieged Constantinople three times.

The inhabitants of conquered territories were gradually converted to Islam by, among other tools, the policy of taxing non-Muslims. Islamic law officially tolerated the other "peoples of the Book" (Jews and Christians), but it subjected them to taxa-

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tion from which Muslims were exempt. Zoroastrians and adherents of other religions, on the other hand, were usually given the choice of conversion or execution.

The Christians fought back, and the Byzantine emperors Nicephorus II (963-969) and John I (969-976) regained some territory. After the disastrous Battle of Mantzikert in 1710 (in which the Muslim Turks gained control of most of Asia Minor, the heartland of the empire), the new emperor, Alexis I Comnenus (1081-1118), appealed to the West for aid. As historian Steven Runciman writes, "The Battle of Mantzikert was the worst disaster to befall Byzantium; and it was the indirect cause of the Crusades." Those who reflexively condemn the Crusades should be reminded that they began as a response to Muslim conquests.

After the failure of the Crusades, Islam resumed its westward expansion by military force, eventually conquering Constantinople and putting an end to the Byzantine Empire in 1453. Hagia Sophia, then the largest church in Christendom, was converted into a mosque. In Spain, however, the Muslims were finally expelled in 1492, the same year that Christopher Columbus crossed the Atlantic and discovered America. In 1992, political correctness ensured that the 500th anniversary of both events, in Europe and America, garnered more criticism than celebration.

In virtually every part of the world where a Muslim-ruled state or territory impinges on a state with a Christian or other non-Islamic population, there is almost always bloody conflict, usually perpetrated by Muslims against non-Muslims.

In the decades following 1492, the Turks launched repeated assaults from their new base in Constantinople. In 1526, a Turkish force overwhelmed the Hungarians and Bohemians at the Battle of Mohacs. Three years later, the Turks besieged Vienna. A century-and-a-half later, another massive Muslim push took place. By September 11, 1683, the Turkish janissaries stood but a few hundred meters from the Viennese imperial place. That day, a Polish relief army led by King John Sobieski arrived on the Kahlenberg above Vienna, raising to 70,000 the number of Christian allies trying to lift the siege by 115,000 Turks. The next day, the Poles, Germans, and other allies handed the larger Turkish army a disastrous defeat.

This ended the Turkish advance into Europe for three centuries, until, in 1995, the Turks of Bosnia (the Serbs use this term for the ethnic Slavs of Bosnia-Herzegovina who had embraced Islam during the Turkish rule), aided by the United States, established the first new Muslim state in Europe. In 2001, a second Muslim state was born in all but name in Kosovo, again through the application of U.S. military force. President Clinton, it is said, wished for a legacy. Perhaps his most significant accomplishment will be to have begun the Muslim reconquest of Europe.

As we know all too well, on September 11, 2001, Muslim terrorists devastated two sites in the previously untouched United States. In retaliation, the terrorists' stronghold in Afghanistan has been destroyed, and the country has a new government, which is currently on friendly terms with the United States. President Bush has successfully led us in the war, as he calls it, all the while praising Islam and telling the American people to reject the idea that there is any inherent connection between the religion of Muslims and the acts of the terrorists.

Voices of warning are stifled. The Reverend Sookhdeo notes that, when he was one of the few to criticize a 16-page supplement in the *Daily Telegraph* praising Islam, "I was simply massacred. The only line permitted is that Islam is peace, it is tolerant, it is a wonderful religion . . . We have sold a lie, and the people have bought it."

It is all but impossible for Christian missionaries to enter Muslim-ruled countries, and when foreign or local Christians in a Muslim land seek to evangelize, the prescribed penalty is usually death. If someone converts, death will be his fate. This violates the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of the United Nations, to which all Muslim countries belong. They simply ignore the declaration, and the West silently acquiesces. Criticism would be intolerant.

In virtually every part of the world where a Muslim-ruled state or territory impinges on a state with a Christian or other non-Islamic population, there is almost always bloody conflict, usually perpetrated by Muslims against non-Muslims. Under Soviet totalitarianism, the Muslim elements of the Russian Federation as well as of the Central Asian republics of the Soviet Union were largely kept in check; the same was true of the Muslim population of Sinkiang in western China. With the Soviet Union gone, Christians and other non-Muslims have, once again, suffered at the hands of their Islamic rulers.

Muslim aggression is supported in varying degrees by wealthy Muslim societies in the Near East. In parts of Indonesia, Muslims have launched repeated armed assaults against Christian populations. Nigeria, once seen as the former British colony most likely to prosper after achieving independence, is now torn apart by the determination of the dominant Muslim party of the north to impose *sharia*. Before September 11, hardly any attention was given to the suffering of Christians in Nigeria, or in Somalia and the Sudan, where Muslim-inspired civil war has caused over two million deaths in the last 25 years. Even before the American establishment's love affair with Islam began after September 11, Muslim assaults on Christians went largely unnoticed. In much of Europe and increasingly in the United States, Muslim communities aggressively undermine every effort even to understand what has been done in the name of Islam, not to mention efforts to restrain it.

The United States have demonstrated that we have power—at least enough to defeat Taliban ground forces numbering about 40,000. What we have not demonstrated is that we understand what is at stake or that we understand the truth. The only alternative explanation for this lack of understanding is cowardice. As Jean Maisonneuve wrote, tolerance toward people is a variety of magnanimity, a virtue; but tolerance toward positions known to be false is cowardice, a lie, a crime.

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He Whose Loss Is Laughter

"To the one who conquers I will give some of the hidden manna."
—Revelation 2:17

by Fr. Hugh Barbour, O. Praem.

Anatol Woolf

Around the turn of the 20th century, the hieromonk Arsenios, parish priest of Farasa in Cappadocia, had secretly baptized one of the wives of a Turk living in his Christian village. Soon after, she lay on her death bed, and he sent her the *viaticum*. Cutting a hole in a small apple, he placed the Holy Sacrament therein and stopped it up again. "Christ, love of my soul," whispered the neophyte now named Eleftheria, as a Christian servant proffered her the hidden manna. In 1924, when the villagers of Farasa had to flee their ancient Roman Christian Cappadocia in the dreadful "exchange of populations" between Greece and Turkey, Eleftheria had been long dead and buried in the Orthodox Christian cemetery. And so she remains to this day.

In his *Dialogues with a Muslim*, the Christian Roman emperor Manuel II Palaiologos, a vassal of the Turks like his father, made this observation to his host from Baghdad:

> Now I would like to refute your pretension of attributing the highest dignity to the law of Mohammed. I will speak concisely and simply.
>
> First there came the law of Moses, which you judge imperfect. This law set down in writing circumcision and everything that your law later took from it. Then came baptism and chrismation and our other mysteries and a better and more perfect law than the first. That our law is better than that of Moses you yourself have admitted. But then with your law there comes again circumcision and practically all the precepts of the first law.
>
> If this is the case, how can you call it progress? Is there any right order in this? None at all, I am sure you will admit. It is like turning in circles, or going from what is higher back to what is lower.

The Sacraments, the mysteries of grace, define most profoundly and concretely the difference between Islam and Christian culture. The law of Moses was fulfilled in the law of Christ, the imperfect in the perfect. The law of Muhammad is, on the other hand, a corruption rather than a fulfillment. Hilaire Belloc wrote in *The Battleground: Syria and Palestine, the Seedplot of Religion*:

> Mohammed threw aside priesthood, because there was therein too much of complexity; and he threw aside the Sacraments, because there was therein too much mystery. Further—most tremendous of innovations!—with the Sacraments Islam threw aside the Mass, round which all our Christian society had centered.

In contrast to Belloc and the *basileus* of the Romans, an American at the turn of the third millennium might be surprised at the assertion that the Sacraments constitute *the* cultural difference between the religion of Jesus and the religion of the Ka'ba. Perhaps he might see the point more clearly if it

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were to be put in more pragmatic terms, as though the difference between one worldview and another had to do with what each understands to "work," to "make things happen," to "have an impact" on the final outcome of things. Computer technology, end-of-history dialectic, free-market economics, or new-age magic might seem particularly efficacious in a culture whose new motto is (with all apologies to a true Christian hero whose words have been so brutally misapplied) "Let's roll." Jesus, however, declared "I am the bread of life . . . This is the bread which comes down from heaven that a man may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any one eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread which I shall give is my flesh for the life of the world."

This "hard saying" reveals the heart of Christian culture. For the Christian, the sensible world conveys a divine power, not as a mere appearance, but as an efficacious cause and presence. This is the logic of the Christian mysteries: Because of the Incarnate God, created things share and cause an uncreated grace.

The genuine, causal power of created things, which had been justified "from below" by Aristotle, was revealed "from above" by Jesus who said "Amen, Amen I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." In abolishing the Christian mysteries, Islam adopted an extreme theocentrism that denies to creatures any share in causality and to God the sheer goodness of sharing His power with His handiwork. Little wonder, then, that the only serious philosophical discussion native to the radically anti-sacramental Islam is the "problem" of the merely apparent causal power of created things. This is the chief *quaestio disputata* of the only purely orthodox Islamic philosophical school, the *Mutakallimun*, who assert the sole causality of God, about which St. Thomas Aquinas writes in his *De Potentia*:

> It is to be conceded simply speaking that God operates in all those acting by nature or by will, but some, not understanding how this is, fell into error, attributing to God every natural operation in such a way that no natural thing would act by its own power . . . As Rabbi Moses tells us, the speakers in the law of the Moors reckoned it impossible that a natural thing could by its own form bestow a like form on another subject. Whence they asserted that it is not the fire which heats, but God creates the heat in the thing heated. But if it be objected against them that heating always follows on the application of fire to the heatable, as long as there is no obstacle to the fire, which shows in fact that fire is the cause of heat of itself, they would say that God made this order to be observed in things, that He would never cause heat, except on the application of fire, but not that the fire when applied would actually contribute to the warming.

Eight hundred years later, no Hume, no Berkeley could be as radical an empiricist as were al-Ash`ari and the other *Mutalkallimun*. All creation is seen as a complex of the merest signs without efficacy, dependent on the sheer will of One: How devastatingly different is this from the "very good" world over which a Creator gives man dominion to subdue and fill it, and then becomes Himself the Son of Man, the firstborn of all creation! No wonder Islam teaches that only Christ's *shadow* was crucified: A Docetist Christ befits a Docetist creation.

Muhammad did not have to teach explicitly the speculative conclusions of the orthodox Muslim schoolmen's *kalam*. To produce such a culture, it was only concretely necessary for him to abolish, in the name of Allah, the Christian sacramental law, for this law *requires* a Creation that shares in God's causal power, which effects the divine glory and wisdom and power it signifies as the ultimate, universal, *efficacious* outward sign of an inward grace. This he did, and by a logical contrast, the culture of Kismet came out of the desert. "For this reason not only the theology but also the anthropology of Islam is very different from Christianity" says Pope John Paul II in his *Crossing the Threshold of Hope*. What is Christian anthropology after all, except the union of the human with the divine nature in the Incarnation and its Sacraments? The Pope goes on: "Whoever knows the Old and the New Testaments, and then reads the Koran, clearly sees the process by which it completely reduces Divine Revelation. . . . In Islam all the richness of God's self-revelation . . . has definitely been set aside." An occupant of another Roman throne, the emperor Manuel II, would have heartily agreed.

Perhaps even a Christian reader might wonder why it is such a destructive error to hold a notion of divine causality as stark as that of Muhammad, how it is that it "completely reduces" the revelation of God it claims to enshrine. St. Thomas Aquinas, in providing a refutation of the *Mutakallimun* in the third book of his *Summa contra Gentiles*, satisfies this wonder and, in so doing, puts in broadest terms the sacramental principle, which most distinguishes our culture from Islam:

> As it is the function of the good to make what is good, so it is the prerogative of the highest good to make what is best. But God is the highest good . . . So, it is His function to make all things best. Now it is better for a good that is conferred on a thing to be common to many than for it to be exclusive, for as Aristotle says "the common good is always found to be more divine than the good of one alone." But the good of one thing becomes common to many if it can pass from one to the other; this cannot occur unless it can diffuse this good to others through its own action. On the other hand, if it lacks this power to transfer this good to others, it continues to keep it exclusively. Therefore, God so communicates His goodness to created beings that one thing that receives it can transfer it to another. Therefore, to take away their proper actions from things is to disparage the divine goodness.

For the Christian, all reality is a true and literal commonwealth of goodness. Beginning with the God who is Goodness Himself, all good things diffuse their own goodness in imitation of their Maker, each individual of each nature passing on its measure of goodness like a little god. Evil only comes when a thing is hindered from acting on (which is the same as passing on) the good it possesses. God thus creates and rules His creatures politically, not despotically. He does not force submission—*Islam*—but moves as the Good, the One desired above all.

No nation, no system of government, no one class, no one economy, no power can claim absolute value in a world in which God Himself shares his goodness *really*, and—wonder of wonders—even submits Himself to the real authority of His creature, which it would not have were it not given "from

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above." "He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate." Here is the Christian culture implied in that article of the Creed: the union of both a universal providence and an individual subsidiarity so good as to be able to survive and draw an even greater good out of the greatest evils. Such a thing can only come from God. It is more than a mere religion even, for "as for prophecies they will pass away; as for tongues they will cease; as for knowledge it will pass away," for "Love never ends." It is God Himself and those who have become like Him.

This is why the defeat of Christian lands by a despotic ideology like Islam and its moral equivalents is not the final word of history, even if some in high places see this "religion of peace" as compatible with the system that, for them, signifies the long awaited money-Messiah of the "end of history." In his poem "Lepanto," G.K. Chesterton depicts Muhammad roused from his paradisiacal repose calling on his dubious angels to go out to confront the forces of Christendom. This Mahound is all too aware of the free spirit that makes the true Christian indifferent to everything except the good only he can do:

> But a noise is in the mountains, in the mountains, and I know
> The voice that shook our palaces—four hundred years ago:
> It is he that saith not "Kismet"; it is he that knows not Fate;
> It is Richard, it is Raymond, it is Godfrey at the gate!
> It is he whose loss is laughter when he counts the wager worth,
> Put down your feet upon him, that our peace be on the earth.

A question, unpleasant in the extreme, enters the mind of the thoughtful reader: Does the ambivalence of our current political and religious leaders regarding Islam signify something deeper—much deeper, perhaps—than politeness? Why is it that our President needed to teach us the difference between true Islam and false, as though he had some authentic *magisterium* enabling him to enter into disputes among the inhabitants of the *Dar al Islam*? Does he not know that, according to Islam, to be at peace with Islam means to dwell in the house that bears its name? Is this his 21st century equivalent of *Ich bin ein Berliner*? Does he know that, in real, historical, orthodox Islam, an Islam professed equally by our "allies" as by our enemies, the only other house is the *Dar al Harb*, the "house of war"?

The Christian tradition does not recognize such dichotomies, nor does it require us to adopt those of our historical foes. But it does require us to speak the truth. Even the most mainstream publications in Europe point these things out, but you are unlikely to see them in print in this country. In *Nova et Vetera*, a review directed by the Pope's own personal theologian, the Dominican Fr. Cottier, the latest number points out that "In Muslim writings the Christian world is the House of War (*Dar al Harb*) *par excellence*, and war against Christendom is the prototype of the *jihad*." Speaking the truth about what Islam really teaches does not require us to act according to its law, even if, for the sake of the common good, we must vindicate ourselves when attacked. Strangely, though, those who want our country to behave like the *Dar al Islam*, in perpetual war with any system other than its own, are the very ones who are careful not to speak clearly and simply about what Islam really teaches. Perhaps the open-ended "war on terrorism" is the *jihad* of a secular, globalist "Islam" in which ideology, not Sacraments rule. Such a world, however, is not a Christian world, and *we are Christians*.

What is the Christian to do, caught between the old Islam and its mainstream American *ersatz*, the "New World Order"? He must *live a sacramental life*, he must follow the Christian law, feeding on the Bread of Life, looking to the eternal life and resurrection Our Lord promises. He must be convinced that he can always do good, no matter how corrupted and beyond repair he, his family, or his country may be. He must be faithful to them all, for the world is "very good."

On August 14, 1924, the Christian villagers of Farasa left their homeland to be taken over by the Turks, but they also left their Christian dead, including the secret Turkish convert Eleftheria. The elder Paisios of Mount Athos, a native of Farasa who passed away only in 1994, tells the story. After her death, Eleftheria appeared to her family, harassing them, turning things over in the house, waking them in the night, demanding that her body be taken from the Muslim cemetery to the Christian one. Her family approached Father Arsenios. Her husband asked for her to be buried in the Christian graveyard. He said: "It seems she loved your religion." Father Arsenios answered her husband: "What are you asking me for? I'm a Greek and you're a Turk. You do what you want." He replied: "No, Father, I don't want to act without your blessing." And so Father Arsenios allowed the burial and did not reveal the secret, which could have cost the life of her Christian godmother as well as his own. Then Eleftheria appeared again to the Turkish household and wished them all well: "May you live a thousand years! I'm in Paradise in the light, enjoying the good gifts of God."

There is no power on earth that can keep us Christians, even now, from enjoying the good gifts of God if we are resolved to remain faithful to the law of Christ. That apple, which served as a ciborium for the great Sacrament of the New and Eternal Covenant, "round which all our Christian society had centered" (to quote Belloc again), was the triumphant complement of an insight of the emperor Manuel II Palaiologos 500 years before, when he told his Muslim interlocutor:

> If the Savior, in adding to the old law, like a painter, the colors it needed, brought it to perfection, what do you say of one who tried to efface them and to spoil the beauty of the picture? I know well that you cannot say anything of him and his actions . . . Another, however, could have said to the man quite rightly "You are a scourge, because you have destroyed for the sake of your fantasies the shoots which would have brought forth the fruit of immortality."

We do not belong to the "house of submission" or to the "house of war" but to the "house of bread," the Bethlehem that is the homeland of our culture, until we reach with Eleftheria and all other Christian strugglers the Paradise where we will enjoy the "fruit of immortality." In the meantime, perhaps the best characterization of the beleaguered Christian of the early 21st century is Chesterton's picture of the crusading late-16th-century one: "It is he whose loss is laughter when he counts the wager worth." We do not fear loss in a world made by a God such as the God of the Christians.

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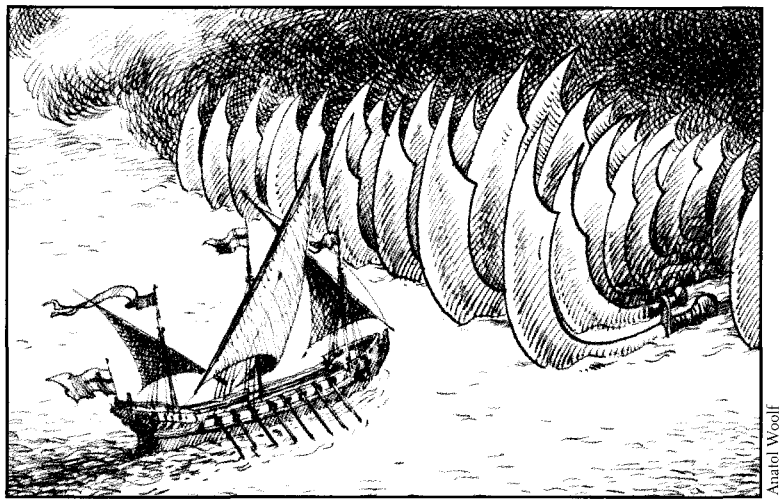
Lepanto: A Category of the Spirit

Recovering Fortitude

by Roberto de Mattei



Anatol Woolf

There are days and places in history when time seems to stand still and, in the space of a moment, the fate of future centuries is decided. At dawn on October 7, 1571, the spectacle would have made a strong impression on anyone who looked out at the waters breaking upon the straits that join the Gulf of Patras to the Gulf of Corinth, formerly called the Gulf of Lepanto, after an old fortified city that rose up from the sea. A gigantic fleet advanced slowly, with the south wind at its back. About 270 galleys and a massive number of light craft formed an enormous and threatening semicircle that occupied the seas from the mountainous coasts of Albania to the north and the shoals of Peloponnesus to the south. At the center of the advancing crescent, on the admiral's flagship (the *Sultana*), a green banner waved in the breeze. The flag had been brought all the way from Mecca, and into its fabric the name of Allah was woven in gold 28,900 times. In September 622 of the Christian era, a man declaring himself the prophet of this deity had issued a call for the conquest of the world. The religion he founded summed up its mission in its name: *Islam*, submission.

Now, confronting the power of Islam, came a smaller fleet. Sailing into the wind, using only the power of oars, the ships lined up in the shape of a cross. The red and white flagship, the *Royal*, was flying a blue damask silk standard bearing the image of a crucifix. From the precious blood of this God made Man, crucified at Calvary, the Church developed and gave birth to a great civilization, the highest that has ever been known: Christendom. This civilization was under attack.

In 1453, after Mehmed II had conquered Constantinople—and, with it, the Christian empire of the East—the Turks had regarded the day of their universal dominion as imminent. In 1521, they gained possession of Belgrade; in 1526, they conquered Hungary and arrived at the gates of Vienna. In Italy, they had invaded and laid waste the entire southern coastal region.

Tripoli had already been taken from the Spanish; the island of Chios, from the Genoese; Rhodes, from the Knights who possessed it; and even Malta itself, the later seat of the Knights, would have fallen to the Turks had not Jean de la Vallette, grand master of the order, defended and saved the island with heroic valor.

In February 1570, a Turkish ambassador arrived in Venice, carrying an ultimatum from the Sublime Porte: Either give up the island of Cyprus to the sultan or there would be war. Venice had refused the ultimatum with disdain, but after 11 months of siege, the city of Famagosta on Cyprus fell on August 1, 1571. The terms of surrender guaranteed the lives of the remaining defenders, but once the Turkish commander entered the city, he gave orders that the commander of the Christian fortress, Marcantonio Bragadin, be skinned alive. His body was quartered, and his skin—stuffed with straw and dressed in his uniform—was dragged through the city. Terror reigned on the Mediterranean, and it seemed that Islam was arranging the same fate for all the Christians of Europe that it had inflicted on the Christians of Cyprus.

Sitting on the chair of St. Peter was a Dominican theologian, Michele Ghislieri, who had been made Pope at the beginning of 1566, taking the name Pius V. He appreciated the seriousness of the danger and understood that only a preemptive war would save the West. With grave and moving words, he exhorted the Christian powers to unite against the aggressors, and he made defense of Christianity the principal object of his brief pontificate.

Not everyone responded to the call. The expansion of the

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Turks had been made possible, in part, by the complicity of Christian powers such as France, which, in the name of *Realpolitik*, encouraged and financed the Turks in order to weaken France's traditional enemy, Austria.

Nonetheless, thanks to the Pope's prayers and exhortations, Spain, Venice, and Rome formed an alliance against the Turks on July 25, 1570. They were soon joined by the duke of Savoy, the Republics of Genoa and Lucca, the grandduke of Tuscany, the dukes of Mantova, Parma, Urbino, and Ferrara, and the Sovereign Order of Malta. This alliance was a prefiguration of Italian national unity, though on a Christian basis—the first major Italian political and military coalition in history.

Don John of Austria was chosen to head the Christian League. This young man—only 25 years old—was the natural son of Charles V and the half-brother of Phillip II of Spain. The pontifical fleet, assembled with the help of the Knights of San Stefano, was commanded by Marcantonio Colonna, duke of Paliano, to whom the Pope entrusted the Church's banner. The Holy League was officially proclaimed in Rome at St. Peter's Basilica. After leaving their rendezvous point at Messina, the Christian fleet sailed for 20 days before attacking the enemy at 11:00 A.M. on Sunday, October 7, 1571.

The battle lasted five hours, and the outcome was decided in the center of the formation where the flagships were grappled together, forming a floating battlefield on which attacks were followed by counterattacks, until the regiment of Sardinian Arquebusiers succeeded in unleashing the decisive attack. Ali Pasha, the Turkish commander, was shot dead, and aboard the *Sultana*, the Crescent was hauled down and the Cross hoisted up.

Among the many who covered themselves with glory on that day were the noble houses of the Colonna and the Orsini; the count of Savoy, who fell in battle; the 23-year-old Alessandro Farnese, destined to become one of the greatest *condottieri* of the century; and Giulio Carafa, who, after being taken prisoner, managed to free himself and take over an enemy brigantine.

The Venetians paid the greatest tribute of blood. The Venetian *provveditore*, Agostino Barbarigo, who commanded the left flank of the Christian formation, fought on—with an arrow sticking out of his left eye—until his strength left him; Sebastian Venier fought with his head unprotected and wearing slippers, because they afforded a surer footing on deck. At 75 years old, he managed the catapult with a sailor's help. Overwhelmed by numbers, he was helped by the galleys of Giovanni di Loredan and Caterino Malipiero, who fell in the struggle.

With equal courage, 12-year-old Filippo Pasqualigo received the last words of his brother, shot dead by the Turks. Antonio Pasqualigo was commander of the galley the *Crucifix*. He had brought his younger brother with him to teach him how Venice was to be served. This was the way they were reared, those whom the people recognized as "Venetian patricians." This was the way the Italian aristocracy, renowned for their valor throughout Europe, fought in those days.

An eyewitness, Ferrante Caracciolo, describes in his *Commentaries* the spectacle of that afternoon:

> The Sea was full of corpses, tables, clothing, Turks who fled by swimming, others who drowned; many shipwrecked vessels, and colored crimson from so many killings; ships that looked on fire, others that went to the bottom, the rocky coast full of Turks who were fleeing and at whom our galleys were firing cannonades at a furious rate, so many little boats of the enemy were beached making a horrifying and frightening spectacle for the losers, but a sight that brought our men, on the contrary, joy and delight.

At the end of the battle, the league had lost more than 7,000 men, as well as about 20,000 wounded. The Turks lost more than 25,000, and 3,000 were taken prisoner. The name of Lepanto had entered into history. For the first time in a century, the Mediterranean was free. The decline of the Ottoman Empire had begun.

Islamic terrorism is simply a strategic variant of the broader project of conquest whose ultimate goal is the Islamicization of our society.

In the afternoon of October 7, 1571, Pius V, who had multiplied his prayers to the One Who had always succored Christians in their times of crisis, was going over the accounts with several prelates. Suddenly, he stood up and went over to the window, staring as if in a trance; returning toward the prelates, he exclaimed: "Let us no longer occupy ourselves with business, but let us go to thank the Lord. The Christian fleet has obtained victory." The Pontiff attributed the triumph of Lepanto to the intercession of the Virgin and expressed his will that they add, in the liturgies at Loreto, the invocation "*Auxilium christianorum*." Even the Venetian Senate decided to accord the Virgin the principal merit for the victory; on a panel in their meeting room, they had painted these words: "*Non virtus, non arma, non duces, sed Maria Rosari, victores nos fecit*"—"It was not courage, not arms, not leaders, but Mary of the Rosary that made us victors."

Some might ask if Pius V, instead of promoting and undertaking a war, would not have done better to stretch out the hand of friendship to Islam, seeking peaceful coexistence through dialogue and toleration. For those who favor this option, Lepanto becomes an historical memory to eliminate, an episode to forget. They believe that the choice before us today is between fanaticism, which finds its expression in terrorism, and the relativism—modern and postmodern—that deceives us into thinking that we can avoid war by not speaking its name.

To reduce radical Islamism to terrorism or to the deliriums of a psychotic, however, is to insult both Islam and our own intelligence. Radical Islam is an interpretation that is coherent and widely spread throughout the world of Islam. It may not be the majority opinion, but it is strong precisely because it is radical and coherent, and it will, therefore, expand within Islam, which even in its moderate version has always had as its goal—derived from the Koran—the subjugation of the entire world to the word of Allah. This is a teaching that characterizes all Islam, before and after Lepanto.

Islamic terrorism is simply a strategic variant of the broader project of conquest whose ultimate goal is the Islamicization of

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our society. The gentler and more effective means of reaching this goal are demographic increase and the gradual introduction of Islamic law, the peaceful conquest of Western society according to the formula recorded years ago by Bishop Bernardini of Smyrna: With your laws we shall conquer you, with your might we shall dominate you.

If St. Pius V is going to be accused of fundamentalism or fanaticism, that accusation would also have to be extended to Our Lord, who claimed to be God incarnate, and to His holy apostles, who claimed to announce to the world the truth of salvation, absolute and without compromises. The apostles and the missionaries who followed them did not use weapons; they firmly believed in the message they announced, its superiority, and its power to assure eternal life to our souls and a relative happiness on earth to men. This earthly happiness, relative because it is accompanied by Original Sin, was called "Christendom." It was to defend this threatened civilization, not to impose the Faith upon the world, that those who fought at Lepanto took up arms.

> The "clash of civilizations" was not invented by Samuel Huntington; it is a reality, whether we wish it or not.

In praising their heroism, we are not launching a holy war, only recalling that we have a right to legitimate defense, that we have something worth defending, something worth more than life itself, because it is a spiritual good that belongs to preceding and future generations: Our Faith, our culture, and our civilization. The "clash of civilizations" was not invented by Samuel Huntington; it is a reality, whether we wish it or not. To acknowledge its existence is not the same as to desire it, and if we were to eliminate the phrase from our language, we would not so easily eliminate the reality.

It would be wonderful if we could avoid war by simply refusing to label an aggressor as "the enemy." Unfortunately, in a war of defense, it is not up to us to choose the enemy: The enemy chooses us. The gates of the gulag and of concentration camps stand open to receive all those who refuse to defend themselves, but those who choose to fight may hope for victory. For this reason, Christian combat, which is a spiritual attitude more than anything else (although it includes the possibility of legitimate defense and just war), belongs to the tradition of the Church.

The Church has never professed pacifism. The total pacifist—someone who rejects even a just war—has forgotten that there are some evils that are more profound than physical and material ones, and he has failed to distinguish between the ruinous consequences of war on the physical plane and the causes of war, which are moral and originate in the violation of order—in a word, sin. Every Christian must desire and work for peace. In a 1948 radio message, Pius XII explained that the call to peace is based on divine law. But peace, as Saint Augustine taught, is tranquility of order; and this presupposes a just moral and social order, or even a Christian order. It is a natural order in which the laws of reason and nature, imprinted upon the human heart, are respected. This justice represents a common good that we may not renounce, because the renunciation of this common good, the negation or the destruction of this natural and Christian order, has as its consequence the unhappiness of men on this earth and the eternal destruction of their souls.

The goal of peace, explained Pius XII, is the protection of humanity's goods insofar as they are the creature's goods, some of which are so important for the life we share as human beings that "their defense against unjust aggression is, without doubt, completely legitimate. . . . A people that is threatened or already victimized by unjust aggression, if it wants to think and act in a Christian manner, cannot remain in a state of passive indifference." The Christian does not fight because he loves war; he fights because he loves peace—true peace, just peace, the peace that requires in its own defense a just war in accordance with Christian moral theology. According to just-war theory, war is illicit when it is waged without just cause, but for those whose cause is just, war is not only licit but even, in certain cases, mandatory.

Today, however, an internal enemy threatens us. This enemy is first and foremost a mental attitude that surrounds us, even in Catholic circles—if not especially in Catholic circles. Radical Islam is not wrong because it professes truth; it is wrong because it professes error. If, in opposing error, we uphold relativism—a vision of the world in which there is room for every error, because the whole idea of truth is to be jettisoned—then we are committing an error even greater than that of the radical Islamicists.

This is the error of those who claim that the age of Lepanto and the Crusades is over and, with them, the spirit of Christian combat that presupposes a vision of the world based on the primacy of the absolute truth that is worth living and dying for: the truth of the Gospel. In its place, they offer a vision of the world that tells us that nothing exists that is either absolute or true, that everything is relative to the time, the place, and the circumstances.

This relativism leads us to avoid conflict and polemics at all costs—to give up testifying to what is true, good, and just. This apathy is the direct opposite of the spirit that animated the Christian martyrs, who gave us an example (in the words of Pope John Paul II) "of a life totally transfigured by the splendor of moral truth." It is not death that makes the martyr, says Saint Augustine, but the fact that his actions are in conformity to truth, that his suffering and death are directed toward justice. Martyrdom is the highest embodiment of the virtue of fortitude, whose essence lies in the disposition to suffer in order to realize the good. "For the sake of the good," says St. Thomas Aquinas, "the brave man exposes himself to the peril of death."

As heirs of Lepanto, we should recall the message of Christian fortitude which that name, that battle, that victory have handed down to us: Christian fortitude, which is the disposition to sacrifice the good things of this earth for the sake of higher goods—justice, truth, the glory of the Church, and the future of our civilization. Lepanto is, in this sense, a perennial category of the human spirit.

Today, the West—what was the Christian West—is undergoing an attack without precedent, not only from without but from within. What remains of Christendom deserves to be defended, because it is from this remnant that a different and better future will be constructed for the generations to come. ·C

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Pat Buchanan, Conservative Revolutionary

by E. Christian Kopff

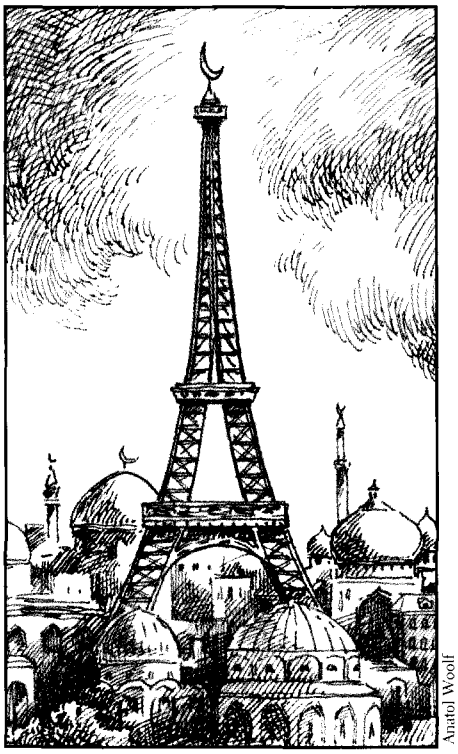
"An Liberalismus gehen die Völker zugrunde."
—Moeller von den Bruck

The Death of the West: How Dying Populations and Immigrant Invasions Imperil Our Country and Civilization
by Patrick J. Buchanan
New York: St. Martin's Press;
308 pp., $25.95

◆

Pat Buchanan's exciting new book demonstrates clearly and convincingly that the population base of Western civilization is disappearing as Europeans and Americans are no longer reproducing themselves even at replacement rate and thus are being supplanted, both in their traditional homelands and in the New World that they conquered and civilized, by other races, cultures, and religions.

At present birthrates, Europe's population in 2100 will be less than a third of what it is today, Buchanan reports. European birthrates are far below replacement levels. If these remain at current levels, by 2050 there will be 16 million fewer Italians (a decline from 57 million to 41) than there are today, 23 million fewer Germans (from 82 million to 59), and 33 million fewer Russians (from 147 million to 114), while a third of those alive will be over 60. By contrast, the opposite trend holds for the Islamic world. In the next generation, Iraq is expected to grow from 23 to 41 million and Iran, from 67.7 to 94.5 million. Muslim Albania is the only country in Europe whose population is growing. Buchanan predicts that the great Christian victories at Tours and Lepanto, which kept Islam out of Europe and permitted the development of Western civilization, will be reversed in this century by Islamic immigration into Europe and continued high Muslim birthrates there. Although Israel is growing, Palestinians will outnumber Israeli Jews two-to-one by the middle of the 21st century. No reader will forget Richard Nixon's answer when Shelley Buchanan asked him about Israel's future. "'The long run?' Nixon responded. He extended his right fist, thumb up, in the manner of a Roman emperor passing sentence on a gladiator, and slowly turned his thumb over."



Anatol Woolf

Buchanan makes the same judgment on the United States. There are 30 million foreign-born in the United States, one third of whom are here illegally. In California, with 8.4 million foreign-born, an ethnic cleansing of European-Americans is taking place; about 100,000 flee the state every year. Already a minority in California, they will soon be so in Texas. And the future majority has imported its own culture and language. Managers of fast-food restaurants in the Denver area have to communicate with their workers in Spanish. For now, there still has to be one English-speaker in the store to take orders. How long will it be before customers have to use Spanish to get served?

The Death of the West is about more than low birthrates and mass immigration, however. These are symptoms of illness, not the disease itself. The American way of life is under attack.

> Destroy the record of a people's past, leave it in ignorance of who its ancestors were and what they did, and one can fill the empty vessels of their souls with a new history, as in *1984*. Dishonor or disgrace a nation's heroes, and you can demoralize its people.

Buchanan's chapters on "The War Against the Past" and "De-Christianizing America" are a bluntly stated record of the defeats we have suffered in the "culture war" he described so trenchantly from the podium of the 1992 Republican National Convention. The thunderous applause that greeted his message left no doubt that rank-and-file Republicans agreed with him, but the GOP leadership quickly repudiated Buchanan's prophetic words.

The Death of the West displays for all to see the fruits of ignoring or spurning our culture in the service of global free trade. Economists reassure us that we are living better than ever because we have microwave ovens, home entertainment centers, and SUVs, but Americans value such things only insofar as they enable us

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to enjoy our way of life more comfortably with our families. Now, we have lost both family and country. "One-third of all American children now live in single-parent homes. . . . In the African-American community, two-thirds of the children live in single-parent homes." And in many two-parent families, children come home from school to an empty house, because both mother and father are away at work, clinging to a precarious middle-class status. "These are the statistics of a decadent society and a dying civilization."

"Pat," Buchanan often heard on the campaign trail, "we're losing our country." Tom Piatak, in the December 2001 issue of *Chronicles* (*Vital Signs*, "Happy Holidays? Bah! Humbug!"), targeted antireligious fanatics out to erase every trace of Christmas from public life. In his book, Buchanan recites a litany of atrocities committed by culture-war terrorists. In Richmond, they mutilated a portrait of Robert E. Lee. In Selma, they repeatedly trash a statue of Nathan Bedford Forrest. Even black history is the victim of political correctness; it is not just Confederates whose history is rewritten. At Harper's Ferry, "activists" covered over a memorial to Hayward Shepherd, the black freedman who, Buchanan notes, "was the first man killed in John Brown's terrorist raid on the federal arsenal." As *The Death of the West* was moving rapidly up the *New York Times* bestseller list, the new Brooklyn borough president, Marty Markowitz, announced that he was removing George Washington's portrait from his office in Borough Hall, because Washington was an "old white man." "I respect history," Markowitz told the *New York Post*, "but there has to be a recognition that this is 2002. There's not one picture of a person of color, not one kid, not one Latin. Borough Hall should reflect the richness of our diversity."

"I guess everything does change," Merle Haggard sang, "except what you choose to recall." The culture destroyers decide what we recall, or celebrate, or even say. When discussing the pan-European significance of the great Spanish reactionary Donoso Cortés, Carl Schmitt pondered the success of the left in imposing its version of history, so that figures such as Donoso Cortés fall into oblivion. Italian traditionalist Julius Evola responded to Schmitt by calling for an historiography of the right. It was high time, he felt, that the writers and teachers of the great European traditions tell our story in our own way. By reconstructing and defending the history of our national past, Buchanan is laying the foundations for a renewal of American culture.

Neoconservatives and other leftists in the media who gleefully proclaimed that Buchanan's electoral defeats had "marginalized" him were dumbfounded when *The Death of the West* became an instant bestseller. Buchanan is achieving more with his books than any electoral success could bring, because even victories as impressive as those of Richard Nixon in 1972 or Ronald Reagan in 1984 are, by their nature, transient. Buchanan has become a one-man intellectual arsenal, supplying Americans with the weapons we need to defend our past and the tools we require for a free and creative future.

Buchanan suggests intriguing ways to implement his call for cultural and religious renewal, from restoring Washington's Birthday to instituting a National History Bee, modeled on the National Spelling Bee. Good luck! The Scripps Howard National Spelling Bee is a constant thorn in the side of the educational establishment because homeschooled children win so often. One of them even blurted out that he won because he had studied Latin! The educrats will not welcome the additional humiliation of a National History Bee.

"The Civil Rights Act," Buchanan argues,

> should be amended to allow employers to pay higher wages to parents than to single people, to enable one spouse to stay home with infants and toddlers and to be there when the kids come home from school. This should apply to single dads and moms.

As Allan Carlson has noted, we need to turn away from the "minimum wage" and return to the ideal of a "family wage." The economy exists to support a way of life, not *vice versa*. Buchanan's excellent idea should apply, therefore, to married couples, widows, and widowers. We should not encourage illegitimacy or divorce.

It would take relatively few—though fundamental—changes in the tax laws to promote family farms, encourage mothers to stay home and rear their own children, and discourage corporations from moving their workers and executives at the drop of a hat (thereby preventing them from sinking roots in a community). An important reform would be the repeal of the 16th Amendment—instituting the federal income tax—and a return to funding the federal government through tariffs. When foreigners supported it, our national government paid more attention to the best interests of the American people than now, when our taxes contribute directly to its upkeep.

Occasionally, Buchanan displays unwonted—and unwanted—moderation.

> Eventually, the incorporation doctrine, by which all the restrictions imposed on Congress by the Constitution are imposed, through the Fourteenth Amendment, on the states, must be overturned. . . . This is the authority by which the Court dictates to the nation.

How does Buchanan propose to "overturn" the Incorporation Doctrine? By hypnotizing Ruth Bader Ginsburg? This is no time for halfway measures or weasel words. We need to repeal the 14th Amendment. Until we do, there is little hope of restoring true federalism to America, or even consensual rule—never mind controlling immigration. Besides serving as the basis of the Incorporation Doctrine, the 14th Amendment is the Trojan horse inside our Constitution, giving any pregnant immigrant, legal or illegal, the right to become the parent of an American citizen. Backing its repeal will give Buchanan's American Cause a real cause and the Reform Party a real reform.

As Buchanan sees, however, we need more than a few well-tailored reforms.

> With an intolerant new cultural elite now ascendant, a failing of conservatives is that they are conservatives. . . . We traditionalists who love the culture and country we grew up in are going to have to deal with this question: . . . Are we conservatives, or must we also become counterrevolutionaries and overthrow the dominant culture?

The times, he believes, call for a Conservative Revolution, to borrow Armin Mohler's phrase.

Maistre, however, got it right. We do not need a counterrevolution; we need the opposite of a revolution. This means turning our back on the Enlightenment,

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liberalism, and communism and returning to the traditions that formed the early Republic: the English common law, the classical tradition, and Protestant Christianity. The Enlightenment, raging in France, had relatively little influence on 18th-century America. Harvard's Bernard Bailyn thought the Whigs were the most significant influence on the Framers, but Whigs understood themselves as classical republicans, just as Protestants saw themselves as continuing primitive Christianity. Their paradigm was not plunging blindly into the future, but returning to the pure sources of their traditions to renew their strength.

Buchanan still hopes that the Republican Party may "champion the cause of life, of a color-blind society, and of traditional values," but, as he himself reports,

> Not one speaker at the Republican convention in Philadelphia was allowed to defend the party's position on the defining moral issue of life. Yet Colin Powell was given prime time to lecture the party on its supposed hypocrisy in opposing affirmative action, and the chastened Republicans dutifully smiled through their public caning. On the social and moral issues that once defined Reaganism, the party has fled the field.

Buchanan gives George W. Bush the benefit of the doubt. "The culture war is not going away. . . . Eventually, even Mr. Bush, a reluctant warrior, will be dragged in." Is calling Bush "a reluctant warrior" in the culture war a reasonable interpretation of his actions? Candidate Bush equivocated on affirmative action (saying he supported "affirmative access"), met with the homosexual Republicans of the Log Cabin Club, apologized for speaking at Bob Jones University, refused to take a principled stand in the Confederate Battle Flag controversy in South Carolina, and, after he won the primary there, promptly removed from the Texas Supreme Court Building "two plaques to Confederate war dead, paid for from a Confederate widows' fund." President Bush is nationalizing the public-school curriculum, praises the Civil Rights Act of 1964, backs affirmative action by his appointments and policies, endorses food stamps for immigrants, and is perpetually negotiating with Mexican President Vicente Fox to flood our country with aliens against the will and the best interests of the American people. Like Bush *père*, Bush *fils* sees himself as overseer of a kinder, gentler transition from a European, Christian republic to a multicultural, imperial Brazil.

"Once an ideology takes hold of a society, only a superior ideology can exorcise it," Buchanan writes, with his sure instinct for the right verb. "To defeat a faith you must have a faith. What, other than Christianity, is the West's faith?" Hilaire Belloc saw no alternative. "The Faith is Europe. Europe is the Faith." By "the Faith," Belloc certainly, and Buchanan perhaps, means "the Church of Rome," and here I must respectfully disagree. The American Founding was not just English and classical but Protestant. To win the Culture War, we must rally to our banner traditionalists from every people of the Book. Catholics and Jews have made important contributions to America, for which all Americans should be grateful, but they are contributions to a national culture that was flourishing when those contributions were made.

Today's Catholic Church is far different from the Church of Buchanan's childhood, which he described so lovingly in his bestselling autobiography, *Right From the Beginning*. There are wonderful quotes in *The Death of the West* from Bishop Fulton J. Sheen's "Plea for Intolerance" (1931), but it is significant that Sheen was prominent generations ago, in an age of great Catholic nationalists like Father Coughlin and Sen. Joseph McCarthy. Buchanan mentions with approbation remarks about contraception made by Pope Paul VI and Denver's Archbishop Charles Chaput. Paul VI, however, was a neo-Thomist enemy of traditionalists and the Tridentine Mass. Archbishop Chaput has stood up for the Trinity and traditional morality, but when the Vatican appointed an auxiliary bishop for Denver, it sent a priest born in Monterrey, Mexico—a native speaker of Spanish. The appointment signaled to Colorado's immigrants that, as far as their Church is concerned, they do not need to learn English and assimilate to the American way of life—a very different message from that taught at the fine Jesuit schools of Washington, D.C., when Pat Buchanan was a student.

The American hierarchy is infested with neo-Thomists. Robert Hanssen, the FBI agent who spied for the Soviet Union, communed at a church full of them. He fit in well, because the neo-Thomists who dominate American Catholicism are, like communists and liberals, anti-traditionalist and anti-American globalists. There is an inherent contradiction between wanting to be the Church of the New World Order and remaining loyal to traditional commitments to families, nations, and the principle of subsidiarity (federalism). Catholicism has functioned well as a national church in Poland and in Italy after the Concordat of 1929. Her catechism defends nations as part of God's plan. Traditionalists can begin to trust the American hierarchy when it declares against mass immigration and affirmative action and reaffirms the Church's commitment to the historic American nation. To win the culture war, nationalists of all stripes need to unite with all people of faith against the globalists and Enlightenment rationalists. We also need to be clear about who is really on our side.

Pat Buchanan's *Death of the West* is a gimlet-eyed diagnosis of Europe facing its last generation and the United States, its last century—unless we move beyond shortsighted political and economic nostrums and recover our past and our faith. Buchanan is absolutely right to insist that the real battle is cultural and religious. To win the culture war, we must learn to tell our story of America and her heroes, and we must be free to teach that story to our children. Near the end of his beautiful book *On the Platonic Myths*, Josef Pieper reminds us that Platonists and Christians agree that stories—myths and parables—are essential for knowing the truth. The Enlightenment obsession with theories and abstractions, fostered among conservatives by economists and neo-Thomists, has led us to ignore how important stories are. Buchanan knows how to argue with the best of them, but he also knows our stories. In his books, he is showing us how to tell them. If we want our nation to survive into the 22nd century, we need to listen to what he has to tell us. That future America, prosperous and free, will owe much to Pat Buchanan. C

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America's *Second*-Worst Dynasty

by H.A. Scott Trask

America's First Dynasty: The Adamses, 1735-1918
by Richard Brookhiser
New York: The Free Press;
234 pp., $25.00

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Richard Brookhiser's biographical study of four generations of the Adams family illustrates once again that the rich and complex history of our country remains a closed book to the ruling class and their literary apologists. Brookhiser reveals in his introduction that his purpose is to create a usable past: "The United States is formally an egalitarian nation—The Declaration of Independence . . . states that all men are created equal."

John Quincy Adams, son of John Adams, was one of the most experienced men in foreign affairs ever to be elected president. He had served as minister to the Netherlands (1794-96), minister to Prussia (1797-1801), U.S. senator from Massachusetts (1804-1808), minister to Russia (1809-1814), peace commissioner and then minister to Great Britain (1814-1817), and secretary of state (1817-1825). Brookhiser attributes John Quincy's successful rise in government largely to John Adams' position and guidance, as well as to Quincy's native talents and intelligence. Quincy accompanied his father on two diplomatic missions to Europe, where he studied French and received personal tutoring from his father in the classics. Quincy learned French so well that, at the age of 14, he was sent to Moscow with an American diplomat to serve as his translator and secretary. He served as his father's secretary when John was minister to England. Brookhiser's point is that talents and intelligence can go unrealized without proper guidance and favorable circumstances. Hence, we should not be surprised or offended by the fact that fortunate families have persisted over generations in the political establishment of democratic America.

But Brookhiser neglects a third essential ingredient in John Quincy's rise to the presidency: his decision to leave the Federalist Party, join the Republicans, serve Virginia presidents, and embrace Jeffersonian nationalism in opposition to the increasing sectionalism of his native region during the 1800's and 1810's. Quincy supported Jefferson's embargo in 1808 (losing his Senate seat as a result), supported James Madison for president the same year, supported the War of 1812, opposed the 1814 Hartford Convention, and served two terms as James Monroe's secretary of state. During this time, he was an ardent expansionist favoring the acquisition not only of Florida and Texas but of Canada, Cuba, and all of Mexico. Whatever his personal beliefs regarding slavery, he never took a public position against the peculiar institution nor joined with those of his section who opposed the admission of Missouri as a slave state in 1820.

In 1828, John Quincy became the second of the first six presidents to be defeated for reelection to the presidency, the first being his father. Such a defeat must have rankled the ambitious and proud son, just as it had his father in 1800. Furthermore, Quincy could not have overlooked or dismissed the fact that, in both of these defeats, the votes of the South had been decisive and the victorious candidate, a Southerner. As an added humiliation, Jackson, the man who defeated him, was reelected in 1832, continuing the tradition of popular two-term Southern presidents. It is hard to believe that Quincy did not feel betrayed or ill used by the South. How else does one explain his political transformation after his presidency into an anti-expansionist, antislavery, strongly sectionalist congressman from Massachusetts?

Brookhiser's explanation is that Adams' conscience and sense of family obligation to the egalitarian ideals of the Framers finally led him to an antislavery position. He writes that both Quincy and *his* son, Congressman Charles Francis Adams, were outraged that the Declaration of Independence "was now being interpreted as if it applied only to white men" and that Southerners, instead of taking steps gradually to abolish slavery as the Framers had predicted, were now defending it as a positive good.

Brookhiser is confused about who were the innovators and revolutionaries of the day and who were the traditionalists and conservatives. Many Northerners, as well as Southerners, were alarmed that the Declaration was now being re-interpreted by abolitionists as if it applied to *all* men and (what was far more dangerous) that the preamble had come to have some standing in American law. Adams' argument in the *Amistad* case (that the inalienable rights mentioned in the Declaration guaranteed the Africans their freedom) placed ideology above law and was correctly disregarded by the justices in making their decision. The Court did, in fact, find the slaves to be free on the sound legal grounds that they had been shipped from Africa in violation of international law banning the slave trade.

Brookhiser errs in describing Charles Francis Adams as a "conservative." Charles belonged to the progressive wing of the Whig party, supported the radical Southhater and popular demagogue Charles Sumner over the conservative and gentlemanly Robert Winthrop for a U.S. Senate seat, favored statist economic policies (including a high tariff and a national bank), joined the first two purely sectional parties to appear in the United States (the Free Soil and Republican Parties), and consistently opposed political compromises designed to alleviate sectional tensions and preserve the union without war. Brookhiser can argue that these were morally correct positions if he wants to, but he cannot honestly argue that they were *conservative* ones.

Brookhiser has a tendency to make questionable assertions without any attempt to support them with historical facts or argument. For instance, he claims that "the United States could have won independence without French help." On another occasion, he asserts, without evidence, that Charles Adams' greatest service to his country was the role he played while minister to England, in dissuading that country from formally recognizing the Confederacy and intervening on its behalf. This is akin to declaring that Bill Clinton deserves credit for the economic boom of the 1990's simply because he was President at the time.

Throughout the book, Brookhiser betrays his background as a polemicist rather than an historian. He slanders President James Buchanan as "a gracious, gutless homosexual whose lame-duck cabinet was filled with traitors." He offers no evidence, argument, or historical authority to back up his assertion regarding Buchanan's sexuality. Nor does he do justice to Buchanan's constitutional principles. Buchanan—unlike Abraham Lincoln—had moral and patriotic scruples about inaugurating a bloody civil

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war against his own countrymen. He did not believe that the federal government had the authority to coerce a state militarily, much less invade it to force it back into a political union from which it had formally seceded. The majority of Buchanan's Cabinet agreed and urged the President to evacuate Fort Sumter, as its continued occupation by Northern troops was an incitement to war. (This Cabinet was filled with such "traitors" as Caleb Cushing, the respected constitutional lawyer from Massachusetts, and Isaac Toucey, the former governor of Connecticut.)

Like the later Adamses, Richard Brookhiser not only equates secessionism with "disloyalty" and "treason" but reads it out of the American political tradition as a heresy or an expression of mental illness. He thus begs the question that lay at the heart of the war: Did states have an historical and constitutional right to withdraw from the Union? On his own evidence, the answer is yes: Brookhiser observes that "talk of disunion and disloyalty were [*sic*] not uncommon in the early republic," by which he means that many people of that period believed that their states could legally withdraw from the confederation. He even mentions Gouverneur Morris, one of the Framers of the Constitution, "scornfully call[ing]" for "the secession of the north" some 25 years after the federal union was formed. But Brookhiser simply dismisses him as a "peg-legged aristocrat."

Henry—the historian and son of Charles—is the fourth member of the Adams dynasty considered by Brookhiser. He quotes a revealing statement by young Henry before the outbreak of the war, intimating that the South must be "put . . . in the wrong." If the garrison at Fort Sumter "were all murdered in cold blood, it would be an excellent thing for the country, much as I should regret it on the part of those individuals." There were many in the North for whom revenging Fort Sumter was merely a pretext for crushing the South. Murder begins in the heart; it is the same with war.

Why did Brookhiser decided to write yet another book about the Adamses? They are hardly neglected figures in American historiography. Coming right after David McCulloch's biography of John Adams and C. Bradley Thompson's study of his political thought, Brookhiser's book amounts to overkill. Perhaps the answer lies in the affinity between the Adamses and the neoconservatives. The former held all the fashionable positions of their time (they were political centralists, neomercantilists, and anti-Southern), hardly inspiring most today to question their fundamental political assumptions. What is more, they represent that fraudulent form of Northern conservatism that never really conserves anything but simply tags along to ratify the latest triumph of radicalism.

New England had plenty of genuine conservatives during the 19th century about whom Brookhiser could have written, if he were so inclined: Nathaniel Hawthorne, Franklin Pierce, Rufus Choate, George Ticknor. These, however, were men who would have nothing to do with the Adamses, whom they regarded as ambitious and unprincipled opportunists with a radical streak in their makeup. There were Northerners during this period who were state particularists, Jeffersonian constitutionalists, classical liberals, Peace Democrats, and even a few who defended slavery. However, since writing about them would reveal a broader American tradition—or traditions—incompatible with the American social-democratic empire, perhaps Richard Brookhiser thought it best to ignore them. In this, he certainly succeeds.

H.A. Scott Trask is an American historian at work on a book about Northern opposition to President Lincoln during the War Between the States.

Hobbes Lite

by Jeremy Lott

Warrior Politics: How Leadership Demands a Pagan Ethos
by Robert D. Kaplan
New York: Random House;
198 pp., $22.95

◆

Some writers, by dint of hard work, luck, mock outrageousness, and an acute instinct for the acceptable limits of dissent, are able to rise to the prized status of Tellers of Truth. Unlike Orwell—who was a *bona fide* secular prophet and, therefore, ignored—they are rewarded in their lifetimes with brisk-selling books, access to important media outlets, lucrative lectures, and buzz—lots and lots of buzz. Of this phenomenon, Robert Kaplan could stand as Exhibit A. His new book, *Warrior Politics: Why Leadership Demands a Pagan Ethos*, is blurbed by three titans of industry and finance, two former secretaries of state, a former national security advisor, Newt Gingrich, and John Gray of the London School of Economics. The monumental fuss is over a very short essay on foreign policy that makes precious few concrete recommendations. Without the bibliography, endnotes, and the like, it amounts to an anemic 155 pages. In fact—and this may explain the businessmen's enthusiasm—the table of contents contains executive summaries of each of the chapters, allowing the gist of the book to be absorbed in just under two minutes. My late grandfather, a union man, would have called that not bad work, if you can get it.

Still, the meager literary merits of *Warrior Politics* by no means render the book worthless. Rather, its warm reception tells us a good deal about what a great many of our betters think about the future—and, therefore, about us. Completed before September 11—and, so far as I can tell, not reworked in response to those events—Kaplan's book seeks to limn all of the relevant issues confronting American rulers and strategists in the 21st century. To this task, Kaplan brings a particular point of view. "I am," he says, "not an optimist or an idealist"—unlike most Americans, who

> can afford optimism partly because their institutions, including the Constitution, were conceived by men who thought tragically. Before the first president was sworn in, the rules of impeachment were established. . . . Our separation of powers is based on that grim view of human behavior.

Robert Kaplan is on the left wing of what might be called the "realist" school of foreign policy; he argues that progress—small "p"—is not assured and that, in light of the century now behind us, regress is a distinct possibility. For instance, the benefits of technology, though real, are oversold and distributed unevenly: By 2010, "[O]f the 70 percent of the world still not connected [to the internet] . . . about half will never have made a phone call." (*Horribile dictu*!) Kaplan believes that the United States, ideally, should promote "human rights" but doubts the ability of democracy to ac-

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complish this since, in many cases, political freedom can lead to "the violence that liberal societies abhor." More pointedly,

> There is nothing more volatile and more in need of disciplined, enlightened direction than vast populations of underpaid, underemployed, and badly educated workers divided by ethnicity and beliefs.

Kaplan is not speaking as an armchair quarterback. Wandering the world while gathering material for previous books (including one on the fierce warriors of Afghanistan), he learned that order often had to be imposed by an authoritarian hand in order to control anarchy and arrest mass bloodshed.

The "pagan ethos" of the book's title refers to the Greco-Roman axis of Western civilization, which was (as Kaplan describes it) by turns tragic, adaptable, wise—and *strong*. Rome, for many centuries, was able to bring peace and prosperity to a large area of the world principally because she was feared. By contrast, Kaplan presents Christendom as having proved ineffective and otherworldly, placing the highest good above the common one, and fundamentally misjudging international relations.

Kaplan ignores most Western liberals (e.g., Locke and Mill) while seeming somewhat uncomfortable with Machiavelli as well. He believes the author of *The Prince* "may go too far [in his glorification of force] . . . but some academics and intellectuals go too far in the other direction." Instead, he makes Thomas Hobbes his intellectual North Star. Peace, says Kaplan, today requires a global Leviathan—an all-encompassing megapower capable of employing terrific violence to shape and ensure world order. That role—once played by the British Empire but assumed now by America as a consequence of its having won the Cold War—is not only justified but necessary: "*We and nobody else will write the terms for international society*," Kaplan claims in his penultimate chapter.

Kaplan simultaneously praises American particularism and consigns it to the dustbin of history:

> [F]or American power to endure, it will need to be impelled by a more primitive level of altruism than that of the universal society it seeks to encourage. American patriotism—honoring the flag, July Fourth celebrations and so on—must survive long enough to provide the military armature for an emerging global civilization that may eventually make such patriotism obsolete.

Here Kaplan admits, if only backhandedly, that the price of embracing Hobbes' vision may be precipitously steep. Still, he believes the results will be worth the cost. Robert Kaplan seems to have "progressed" (or is it "regressed"?) a long way since the publication two years ago of his previous book, *The Coming Anarchy*, in which he stated that the plans and desires of the global managerial elite must inevitably be defeated by the masses of the world, who want something entirely different for themselves. That he is afforded as much respect as he is by our mandarin class is not an encouraging prospect.

Jeremy Lott is senior editor of Spintech Magazine *and co-author (with the Rev. Dr. Lawrence VanBeek) of the forthcoming* The Case for Enoch.

Beyond the "Other Victorians"

by Barton Swaim

Inventing the Victorians
by Matthew Sweet
New York: St. Martin's Press;
256 pp., $23.95

◆

To call something "Victorian" is, in left-liberal parlance, to say that you don't like it. The fact that hardly anything routinely called "Victorian" accurately characterizes the era of Queen Victoria's long reign, from 1837 to 1901, is one of the great historiographical tragedies of the 20th century. Thus, when a large number of African bishops at the Church of England's 1998 Lambeth Conference dared to suggest that the Church should not condone homosexual behavior because the Bible condemns it, American bishop John Shelby Spong dismissed their reasoning on NPR as "Victorian moralism"—as though the Victorian moralists were known principally for their arguments from Scripture, and, furthermore, as though no one in the history of Christianity ever made much of biblical passages condemning homosexuality until well into the 19th century. What Spong meant was *I don't like it*.

It is the noble task of British journalist Matthew Sweet to show that nearly all of our notions about what was typical in Victorian Britain are either mostly or entirely untrue. *Inventing the Victorians* contains 12 mid-length essays on various aspects of life in Victorian England. Sweet begins each by calling up one of our preconceptions about the era—that most Victorians were naive and prudish about sex, that Victorian interior decoration was characterized by clutter and chinz, that the rules governing manners were arbitrary and impractical—and then sets about demonstrating that the truth is very much otherwise. Even most of the "facts" cited to illustrate these preconceptions are often untrue: There is no evidence that anyone ever draped the legs of a piano, or that anyone ran screaming out of the room in which the Lumière brothers first screened an oncoming train, or that Prince Albert pinned his genitalia to his pant leg in order to hide the bulge that would otherwise appear.

Sweet is not an academic; he is a journalist—a film reviewer of all things—for the British *Independent*. This book, evidently the first of which he is the sole author, is both well researched and well written. Sweet examines an impressive array of primary sources—advertisements in the London *Times* and the *News of the World*, novels by unknown authors, long-forgotten children's books, unpublished journals—and brings them to bear on his subject in clear and engaging prose.

He is, moreover, capable of discerning the degree to which the works he examines should be taken as representative of the era. One reason the Victorians have been so successfully turned into creatures to which they bore only the slightest resemblance is that there is so much material to mine. A bit of mischievous selection does wonders; obscure manuals are regularly cited by sneering English and history professors as though every last subject in the British Empire adhered to them without scruple, while more obvious examples of social commentary are ignored.

One of the delights of this book is that its author dismantles stereotypes that

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even those of us who are instinctively sympathetic toward the Victorians have unwittingly adopted. In "A Defense of the Freak Show," for example, Sweet examines the lives of actual "freaks," from Tom Thumb and Joseph Merrick (the Elephant Man) to the now forgotten Julia Pastrana (the Nondescript) and Hassan Ali (the Egyptian Giant). However unfortunate, these people were treated far better than is customarily thought and were, in fact, happier—and, as a result of their performances, wealthier—than 20th-century portrayals such as David Lynch's 1979 film *The Elephant Man* have led us to believe. By contrast, he contends, those profoundly troubled people who appear on *The Jerry Springer Show*—an exhibition of freakery far more revolting than anything the Victorians had to offer—get next to nothing for their performances. In this respect, as in many others, the present age has little to be smug about.

Why have the Victorians been so often and unjustifiably maligned? The answer, in part, is intellectual laziness. It is simply easier for the professor of Victorian literature, lecturing to a roomful of 18-year-olds or writing an article for one of the trendy academic journals, to use these generalizations as foils for his own brilliant theories and "readings." Throw around that word "Victorian"—or, better, "mid-Victorian" or "high Victorian"—and you sound informed, enlightened, wise. Like all lies and myths, these perpetuate themselves by sheer inertia.

But the invention of the pseudo-Victorians owes chiefly to that peculiar need almost all liberals seem to have of feeling morally superior to their—to our—forefathers. This may sound like a crude bit of political point-scoring, but it is simply true that the lies and myths about Victorians and Victorian culture rightly loathed by Sweet have been generated, with few exceptions, by the left. This is a problem for Sweet, who is, alas, a liberal. (He seems to consider himself a centrist, or at least ideologically autonomous; by the evidence in this book, however, his politics are several notches to the left of center, especially by American standards.)

This explains his repeated and rather lame attempts to distance himself from conservative assessments of the Victorian era, which he calls "nostalgic." So, for instance, after cataloguing numerous misrepresentations and falsifications purveyed by those of obviously liberal viewpoints, he mentions Lerner and Loewe's *My Fair Lady* (1956) and Vivian Ellis's *Bless the Bride* (1947), which

> use the Victorian period to indulge escapist fantasies about romance uncomplicated by anxiety about sexual equality—equality which most of us would be unwilling to relinquish. A political adaption of that same nostalgia was deployed by Margaret Thatcher's Conservative Party in 1983, when it made enormous electoral capital from its invocations of a mythic nineteenth century of Tory content: a utopia of personal thrift, ruined by the foundation of the welfare state and the promulgation of Keynesian economics.

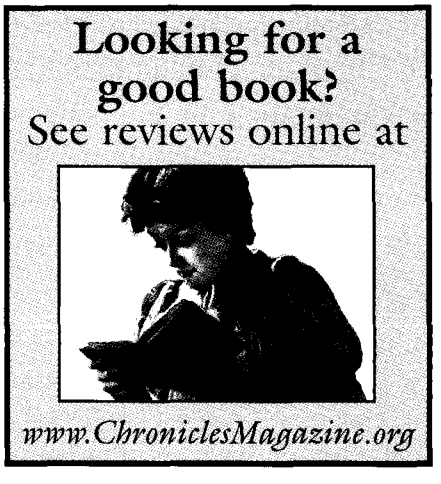
Two musicals and the 1983 Tory campaign: These are about the only instances of misrepresentation propagated by the right that Sweet can recall. (He mentions the campaign three or four times.) Never mind that Thatcher's claims had a great deal of truth in them, for a political campaign especially; but putting *My Fair Lady* on the same level with the intentional rewriting of history—as if every age isn't idealized in novels and musicals—is ludicrous.

On the final page of the book, Sweet drops this conceit: "Why do *we* hate these people?" (italics mine). The answer is obvious. The left's central doctrine is that human nature is essentially malleable and improvable; thus, the 20th century—the century in which liberalism has come to dominate almost every area of intellectual life—must be portrayed as a time of continual progress. Given the difficulties involved in framing the present era as the culmination of a century of moral improvement and cultural advancement, it helps to portray the average person of the preceding century as a racist, a xenophobe, a moral ignoramus afraid of his own body, a cold and cruel boor who thought women had no brains and who was neurotically shy about sex.

Sweet's agitated effort to distance himself from conservative "nostalgia" (a term he absurdly applies to Gertrude Himmelfarb's book *The De-Moralization of Society*) causes him, at several points, to overplay the degree to which the Victorians were "like us," especially in sexual matters. He is quite right to point out that diatribes against "Victorian patriarchy" are almost invariably based on an extremely narrow selection of sources; but to conclude from several eccentric books for adolescent boys that Victorian men were "as puzzled about the nature of their social role as twenty-first-century men" is quite a stretch. Confusion about what it means to be a man rarely, if ever, emerges in straightforward form in 19th-century works, whereas today it is never far below the surface. Again, Sweet believes that the 1890's were "the high noon of sexual ambiguity"—i.e., a time when mix-and-match sexuality was common enough, but when the German psychoanalysts had not yet burdened us with all the paranoia-inducing categories. Well, maybe; but this does not change the fact that the great majority of Victorians believed homosexuality to be a perversion. It was no fluke, as Sweet seems to believe, that the decadent heroes Oscar Wilde and Aubrey Beardsley were publicly disgraced well before the decade was out. The Victorians simply cannot be made over in our own image—not even those of the 1890's, who were Victorian mainly in the sense that Queen Victoria was still on the throne.

None of this is to suggest that *Inventing the Victorians* is dominated by left-wing politics; it is not. In fact, there is at least one passage in this book (in the chapter on freak shows) that very few American liberals would have the courage to write. Matthew Sweet has written an instructive and altogether readable work that is also a scholarly contribution of real merit. It may be a bit too polemical for a book of this sort, but the juvenile attitude toward the Victorians assumed by almost every liberal intellectual since Lytton Strachey doesn't deserve reverence.

Barton Swaim is a writer based in Edinburgh, Scotland.



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Do you recognize this man?

When the University of Chicago sociologist Louis Wirth said that certain people were "suspect because of their origin," he was talking about you, your parents and your grandparents. This group of "ethnic" Americans posed a problem for the psychological warfare establishment. It constituted a Gestalt—ethnic, Catholic, unionized, and urban—whose mutual and reinforcing affiliations effectively removed them from the influence of instruments of communication which the psychological warfare establishment saw as critical in controlling them. It was Wirth's job to bring them under control.

* Do you know how he did it?
* Do you know how social engineering works? You should because you've probably been socially engineered.
* Do you know what the most important area of social engineering is? You should because you probably live where you do today because Louis Wirth thought it was important.
* Do you know who really wrote Gunnar Myrdal's book *The American Dilemma*? You should because it explains who created the policies that determined where you were going to live.
* Do you know how *The American Dilemma* got used as the basis for the civil rights movement?
* Do you know which Supreme Court decision got based on it?
* Do you know the connection between race and foreign policy?
* Do you know that Louis Wirth based his plan on Stalin's "enlightened policies"? Do you know what Stalin was doing when Wirth said this?
* Do you know which foundations he could count on for support?
* Do you know who brought Martin Luther King to Chicago in 1966 to march through that city's ethnic neighborhoods?
* Do you know what Marshall Fields' plan for Chicago's Catholics was?

You should. You live where you live today because of him.

Culture Wars is a magazine that explains how the culture works. It explains how the culture of death preys on you and your children and your grandchildren through things like music, urban renewal, sensitivity training. It explains how sexual liberation functions as a form of political control. The article on how psychologist Carl Rogers destroyed the Immaculate Heart Nuns in Los Angeles by giving them sensitivity training is a classic that has been cited in many other works. What most people still don't know is what Carl Rogers knew, that sensitivity training was created by the Office of Naval Research as part of their psychological warfare arsenal. But *Culture Wars* readers do.

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by Samuel Francis

What Neocons Do on Their Summer Vacations

It is not today exactly a secret of state that neoconservatism has become the dominant expression of what passes for the American "right"—and that its victory is also the reason why it is necessary for more serious conservatives to use the qualifying phrase "what passes for" when referring to the American right and to place the word "right" itself in quotation marks. Much like the proverbial rat race, the controversy between "paleoconservatives" and "neoconservatives" is over, and the rats have won. The best proof is that the major media, when they describe a neoconservative, generally call him a "conservative," plain and simple, as though he alone were representative of the type. The fact remains that most Americans who call themselves "conservative" almost certainly continue to mean by the term more or less the same thing that paleoconservatives mean, but what "most" of any group think, believe, say, or do usually has little connection with what the minority that defines and directs the group does or how it does it. In political and ideological movements, as in bridge clubs and transnational empires, oligarchies prevail.

Like any other gang of conquerors, the neoconservatives, having taken over and redefined the American right, need to decide what to do with the bottomless pits of wealth and power their victory has handed them and to survey the territory they have gained. In the December 2001 issue of the *Atlantic Monthly*, neoconservative journalist David Brooks tries to do just that. Mr. Brooks, the sidekick of *Weekly Standard* editor William Kristol, has for some years now been trying to formulate a refried version of neoconservatism known as "national greatness conservatism," which is really not much more than a triumphalist tour of various byways of American history and culture viewed through the lens of the current globalist and multiethnic conglomeration of Big Government, Big Business, and Big Culture that prevails in the United States and which it is the main business of neoconservatives to conserve. The subject of his article, Mr. Brooks' grand tour of what he thinks is America's heartland, is part of this formulation.

"One Nation, Slightly Divisible," concerns itself with the political division between what television commentators on Election Night 2000 labeled the "red" and "blue" zones that voted for the Republican or Democratic tickets, respectively. (For the first time since the French Revolution, red became the color of the right.) The political divisions are also symbolic of deeper social and cultural divisions, and that is the problem for "national greatness conservatism." If we are going to have the sort of nationalism that neoconservatives like Mr. Brooks and his friends at the *Weekly Standard* favor, then divisions within the nation are rather a no-no. The organic nationalism that actually develops from real subnational, regional differences is what at least some paleoconservatives favor, and the politico-cultural divisions symbolized by the red and blue zones correspond to the territories of what paleos generally call, on the one hand, "Middle" or "Heartland" America and, on the other, the Metropole located in New York, Washington, D.C., and Los Angeles, among other, lesser urban megalopoli. In paleoconservative theory and strategy, the antagonism between Heartland and Metropole defines the major political issues of the day, and it is through the political mobilization of the Heartland that the hegemony of the Metropole can eventually be smashed and something like a traditional American order be restored. It is Mr. Brooks' contribution to neoconservative theory and strategy that he tries in his article to define the Heartland out of existence or, at least, out of political relevance, for if the Heartland does not exist, then neoconservatives can expect to preside forever over the national greatness they have succeeded in conserving.

To substantiate his theory that Heartland America is vanishing or, perhaps more precisely, is coming to accommodate itself to the hegemony of the Metropole, poor Mr. Brooks actually was obliged to leave his beloved Washington, D.C., suburbs and go to the Heartland itself. There, much like Sir Richard Burton in 19th-century Africa (or, perhaps, more like Baron Munchausen), he discovered all manner of wondrous things and sometimes even did such things himself. He ate meatloaf in locally owned, family restaurants and came to the conclusion that the availability of restaurants that serve meatloaf marks the geographical boundary between Red and Blue America. He had conversations with men and women who had never been to college. He saw a number of real tattoo parlors. He attended church and spoke to the ministers afterward. Mr. Brooks, to his credit, acknowledges that he does not belong in Red America, that he is entirely a product of Blue America—specifically, Montgomery County, Maryland, which "is one of the steaming-hot centers of the great espresso machine that is Blue America" and "is full of upper-middle-class towns inhabited by lawyers, doctors, stockbrokers, and establishment journalists like me." Red America, for Mr. Brooks, is Franklin County, Pennsylvania, "a rural county twenty-five miles west of Gettysburg" that includes the towns of Waynesboro, Chambersburg, and Mercersburg and which was originally settled by "the Scotch-Irish and has plenty of Brethren and Mennonites along with a fast-growing population of evangelicals." "The joke," Mr. Brooks confides to his snickering audience,

> that Pennsylvanians tell about their state is that it has Philadelphia on one end, Pittsburgh on the other, and Alabama in the middle. Franklin County is in the Alabama part. It strikes me as I drive there that even though I am going north across the Mason-Dixon line, I feel as if I were going south.

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It is amazing that Mr. Brooks did not take a revolver along with him for protection, but he surely must have made certain that his name, address, and blood type were sewn securely into his underwear.

Mr. Brooks went to Franklin County because he wanted to answer certain questions: "Are Americans any longer a common people? Do we have one national conversation and one national culture? Are we loyal to the same institutions and values?" The answer he came up with, despite his discomfort with meatloaf and tattoo parlors, is that we are. Acknowledging that there are differences in taste, income, education, and even some deeper values, Mr. Brooks tries to puncture the theories of the "culture war" put forward by, among others, Pat Buchanan and Gertrude Himmelfarb, and writes that "almost nobody I spoke with understood, let alone embraced, the concept of a culture war." The editor of a local newspaper assured him that "we would never take a stance on gun control or abortion," and, Brooks writes,"One finds little crusader zeal in Franklin County."

Mr. Brooks' conclusions after his adventures in anthropological research were that

> a lot of our fear that America is split into two rival camps arises from mistaken notions of how society is shaped. Some of us still carry the old Marxist categories in our heads. We think that society is like a layer cake, with the upper class on top. And, like Marx, we tend to assume that wherever there is class division there is conflict.

The truth, he tells us, is that society—or at least American society—is more like a high-school cafeteria, in which different categories of students come and go, sit together or apart, and, for the most part, leave one another alone.

> All these cliques were part of the same school: they had different sensibilities; sometimes they knew very little about the people in the other cliques, but the jocks knew there would always be nerds, and the nerds knew there would always be jocks. That's just the way life is.

Mr. Brooks uses this dubious and rather strained metaphor to get to his conclusion, which I suspect was formulated well before he ever rolled into Franklin County:

> What unites the two Americas, then, is our mutual commitment to this way of life—to the idea that a person is not bound by his class, or by the religion of his fathers, but is free to build a plurality of connections for himself. We are participants in the same striving process, the same experimental journey.

In other words, we are a "credal nation" committed to nothing save the upward mobility and endless ascent that the creed's pursuit of happiness guarantees us. It is not class, religion, race, region, or culture that binds Americans together but their "commitment," their assent to the creed, the "idea," that we are not really bound at all. Conveniently, Mr. Brooks discovered in Franklin County the very same neoconservatism he left in his cubicle at the *Weekly Standard*.

What Mr. Brooks is telling us—and perhaps more importantly, telling his neoconservative colleagues—is that the Heartland is really no threat to them or their values. It is not a cauldron bubbling with lynch mobs, brownshirts, and toothless, smelly old men with shotguns in their pickup trucks. Maybe they do eat meatloaf and get tattoos, but a sport like Mr. Brooks can drive all over Franklin County and never get called a bad name. And, if the Heartland is not really a threat to the Metropole, we can all get along in National Greatness as part of the "same striving process, the same experimental journey." If there is no Buchananite "culture war," then neoconservatism really is the new national orthodoxy.

I have not been to Franklin County, but I readily grant that Mr. Brooks' description of it is probably largely accurate. His interpretation, however remains open to question. In the first place, it is not surprising that there is no bubbling cauldron, no "crusader zeal," or that Franklin County is not Salem, Massachusetts, in 1692 or even Dayton, Tennessee, in 1925. Few places are. Nor is it surprising that residents avoid controversies that have little to do with their personal lives. Most people do, and most people do not ponder subjects like abortion and gun control as much as "establishment journalists" do. The absence of firebrands and crackpots in Franklin County tells us nothing about where it lines up in the culture war; it only tells us that Mr. Brooks cannot quite imagine a culture war that is not waged by firebrands and crackpots.

But the whole point about the culture war that leaders like Pat Buchanan have talked about is that it is a conflict between precisely the "normal" people of places like Franklin County and the real zealots, firebrands, and crackpots in the Metropole. It is not Pat Robertson or Jerry Falwell, for all their flaws, who are abnormal (let alone most of their followers), but the Susan Sontags, Alan Dershowitzes, Julian Bonds, Kevin Costners, Dan Rathers, and Hillary Clintons. If Mr. Brooks wanted to find weirdos and fanatics who use power to uproot one culture and manufacture another, he should have stayed in Montgomery County.

As for the Karl Marx "layer cake" model of society, Marx was not alone in this observation. Anyone who observes accurately the distribution of power, political and cultural, within a society agrees. The jocks and the nerds may know that each clique will always exist, but you can bet the nerds never wonder which one occupies the top layer. Those who try to convince us that society and the distribution of power within it are not invariably hierarchical, with winners and losers, rulers and ruled, tend to be the rulers themselves—or, at least their allies. That is what they want their subjects to believe.

The local newspaper editor in Franklin County probably has a good reason why she does not want to take a position on such issues as abortion or gun control. Fifty years ago, she would have, and the positions would have been ferocious and dismissive opposition to both. Today, she will not, because support for gun control and abortion has become so powerful, even in places like Franklin County, that a small newspaper has good reason to avoid the controversy entirely. The Metropole, in other words, is winning, if it has not already won. Having made a desert by means of ruthless cultural and ideological regimentation, the Metropole and its neocon apologists now call it the Heartland.

Nevertheless, Franklin County, and all the rest of the Heartland, may yet surprise us. With the right leadership and the right explanations of the threat that it and its culture (which is not in the least anything like an "experimental journey" but a real way of life) are facing from the Metropole underneath its smiling mask, what has become the bottom layer of the national layer cake may still decide to put itself on top again. C

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by Scott P. Richert

Through A Glass, Darkly

"We have an Islamic school in Rockford?" my friend said in surprise. His reaction was typical. Rockford, as the local Gannett paper never ceases to remind us, is stubbornly average—in population, ethnic composition, income level—with a few notable exceptions, particularly astronomic property taxes and abysmal public-school test scores. The idea that there is a sufficient Muslim population to sustain a school out here in the middle of Middle America seems inconceivable. But here, on a cold, clear January morning, *Chronicles*' assistant editor, Aaron Wolf, and I are pulling into the parking lot of the Rockford Iqra School.

The building, owned by the Muslim Community Foundation of Rockford, which rents half of it to a private Montessori academy, is a former public school, shut down in the round of school closings that triggered Rockford's 12-year-long desegregation suit. The Muslim Community Foundation, founded in 1985, purchased Vandercook Elementary School from District 205 in 1989 and converted the administrative offices into a mosque. For several years, they used it simply as a meeting place, but a growing desire among local Muslims to provide their children with a better education—both academic and moral—than the public schools could provide led the foundation to start the school four years ago.

We are met just inside the front door (adorned with an American flag, printed on newsprint and distributed by the *Rockford Register-Star* in the wake of September 11) by Atteya Elnoory, a native of Egypt who is in his first year as principal of the school. A short, energetic man, Elnoory welcomes us with the traditional Islamic greeting, "*Assalamu 'Alaikum*" ("Peace be with you"). As we introduce ourselves in the hallway, Elnoory keeps one eye on the arriving students, occasionally stopping one to tell him to walk, not run, and to get ready for the daily assembly in the mosque at 8:45.

After a brief tour up and down the main hallway, we remove our shoes and enter the mosque. The floor is covered with two colors of carpeting, arranged in diagonal rows, and as the male students come in from the main hallway, they align themselves on the rows. It takes a moment for Aaron and me to realize that the carpet swaths orient the students toward Mecca. Some students begin to chant prayers, and the chanting swells, becoming louder, more in unison, but the purpose of the assembly is not to pray—the first of the five appointed daily prayer times has already passed. Because the mosque is not being used for organized prayer, the female students and teachers are allowed to enter. They must, however, pass through a long hallway that brings them to a doorway at the rear of the mosque, where they seat themselves on the floor, two or three rows behind the male students.

The school covers kindergarten through fifth grades; every year so far, another grade has been added. At the beginning of the school year, 33 students were enrolled; since September, Elnoory proudly informs us, that number has risen to 49. Kindergarten and first grade swelled from seven students to 15.

As the last of the children file in, the principal turns on the loudspeaker, and the feedback and echo give the proceedings an otherworldly feel. He begins the assembly by introducing us, and the children turn and greet us warmly. Elnoory calls a young girl forward to read a short essay she has composed for the "Super Muslim of the Month" contest. Her subject is responsibility, and both her reading and composition abilities seem well beyond those of the average public-school student her age. After she finishes, Elnoory asks the other students to provide examples of responsibility. They mention turning their homework in on time, being prompt to class, helping their fellow students—all actions that center on the school. It is a pattern we will see throughout the day, proving the importance of the school to these childrens' lives.

After the assembly, Principal Elnoory takes us back to his office to get acquainted. "Tell me something about your magazine. I tried to look it up on the internet, but I kept getting disconnected." I tell him that we are usually characterized as a very conservative magazine, closer to Pat Buchanan than to George W. Bush. At the mention of Buchanan, he grins. "I've followed his career for a long time, from back when he was on *Crossfire*—the original show, with Tom Braden." He wants to know whether we have any insight into why Buchanan fared so poorly in his presidential bid—is it because of the media? "Do Americans just get their understanding [of the world] from the 5:30 news?" When I tell him that many do, he shakes his head. "The world is getting smaller, and unfortunately, when Americans with this mentality go abroad, they are in for a shock."

We walk down the hall to Miss Stacey Swick's kindergarten and first grade class. This year, all classes are split-grades: K-1, 2-3, 4-5. While the students remain in their classrooms (except for gym class, lunch, and prayers), the structure of the school day is closer to junior or senior high school, divided into seven hours with short breaks in between. The three teachers and Principal Elnoory swap classes throughout the day, so that all of the students can benefit from each teacher's strengths. Elnoory, for instance, teaches Arabic and Islamic studies; one of the two young, unmarried Christian women teaches English and reading; the married Muslim woman teaches math and science.

Miss Swick divides the class into small groups and gives each one an activity to complete. If the children were not so well dressed and well behaved, the classroom would resemble thousands of kindergarten classrooms around the country. Once she sets the students on their first exercise, she comes back to talk to us. A 23-year-old Catholic who graduated from Boylan Catholic High School and Illinois Wesleyan University, this is her second year teaching at the Iqra School, where she finds more religious and cultural similarities with her students than

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differences. When Aaron mentions the modest dress of both the teachers and the students, she claims never to have noticed.

The school's dress code is fairly minimal and very similar to that of most private schools—dark pants or skirt, white shirt or blouse. Still, there is a definite variation between grades that runs counter to most schools: As the children get older, the mode of dress becomes more modest. Most of the girls in K-1 have their heads uncovered, while all of those in second grade and above wear some form of head covering. The older boys are more likely to cover their heads as well. The decision to dress older children in a more traditional manner, the fourth- and fifth-grade teacher tells us later, is made by the parents, not the school.

As the day draws on, the influence of the parents and the broader Muslim community in Rockford becomes obvious. The Muslim families seem to regard the school as the logical extension of the religious life of their homes. Several parents show up for noontime prayers in the mosque, and both Christian teachers note the number of Muslims (several hundred on average) who fill the hallways on Friday and Saturday to worship at the mosque and share meals in the gymnasium. Several of the students tell us that their parents moved from Chicago or even New York City to place their children in the school.

At the end of the first period, we move on to Mrs. Rukhsana Shamim's second- and third-grade classroom. An attractive woman who continually pulls her sleeves down and tucks her hair back into her *hujab* or *chador*, she is preparing the class for a week of testing in math and science. Today, she is drilling them on problems involving money and multiplication. Many of their answers are clearly guesses rather than calculations, and Mrs. Shahim seems somewhat frustrated by the number of incorrect responses. Still, for a second- and third-grade class, the subject matter is relatively advanced.

During a 15-minute break for a snack, we move over to the library, where Principal Elnoory assembles six students of varying age and nationality for us to interview. He leaves us alone with the children, taking evident pleasure in the knowledge that they will perform well. Among the six is Cody, the only Christian child enrolled in the school. Elnoory had proudly told the *Chicago Tribune* in November that, after four years at Iqra, Cody regards himself as a Muslim. Today, however, Cody, a third-grader, tells us a somewhat different story.

His parents (who are divorced and share custody of Cody) are Christian, he says, but "I'm half-Muslim and half-Christian." By the time he leaves Iqra—which he hopes will continue to expand so that he can attend high school and perhaps even college there—"I'll be fully Muslim." When I ask him what denomination his parents belong to, he seems confused. "What kind of church do they go to—for instance, Catholic, Lutheran, Methodist?" "They don't go to church," he replies. Aruba, a third-grade girl, helpfully interjects, "They're American Christians," and Cody readily agrees.

Maaz, a first-grader, wants to know what Aaron and I do, and I tell him that we publish a magazine. "Is it *Superman*?" he asks. No, I tell him, but I do have a sizable collection of comic books.

For more than an hour, the children talk about their lives—their friends, their brothers and sisters (most come from families of four or more, and any siblings in fifth grade or lower either attend Iqra or will, once they turn four), their pets, the music they listen to, the books they read. They watch very little television, mostly educational cable—Discovery, Animal Planet, some PBS. They are all very fond of a series of videotapes called *Adam's World*, featuring Muppet-like characters who, in the course of their adventures, learn the lessons of Islam—sort of a live-action *Veggie Tales* for Muslim children.

The school and the Muslim community in Rockford form the center of their lives. While Cody praises the school for allowing him to learn about a different religion, Zaid, a fifth-grader, likes it because he can learn Arabic, Islamic studies, and the Koran. "We learn about other religions," Zaid says, "so that we can explain our religion to others." Still, with the exception of Cody, the children do not seem to know many non-Muslims their age—"All of our friends support the Islamic way," Zaid says, and "brothers and sisters are the best friends." The school and the Muslim Community Foundation sponsor activities, including talent shows, at which the children perform traditional and contemporary Muslim songs. Zaid and Nabia, a fourth-grade girl whose ninth-grade sister is the only sibling in a public school in Rockford, start to sing a "Muslim rap" that they learned for a recent show.

Give me, ya-Allah, Give me *Iman*
and victory.
Give me, ya-Allah, give me
strength to set us free,
As we struggle on your path,
Mujahideen
Grant us, ya-Allah, the eyes to see
your light,
And show us, ya-Allah, what is
wrong and what is right
As we walk along your path, *Siratul*
Mustaqeem . . .

The word *mujahideen* is jarring, especially coming out of the mouths of nine- and ten-year-old children. Zaid translates it as "people who struggle in the way of Allah," giving it a spiritual twist that initially seems appropriate, since *Iman* means "faith" and *Siratul Mustaqeem* is "the straight path" or "the path of righteousness." The next verse, however, calls to mind a more common definition:

Help us, ya-Allah, to spread this
blessed *deen*
And help us, ya-Allah, help the
Muslimeen
And help us, ya-Allah, overcome
the *Mushrikeen* . . .
Make us, ya-Allah, fighters for your
deen,
And make us, ya-Allah forever *Mumineen*
And do this, ya-Allah, despite the
kafireen . . .

According to the glossary of Islamic terms compiled by the International Islamic University (*www.iiu.edu.my/deed/glossary/index2.html*), *deen* is "Usually translated as 'religion', but in fact mean[s] 'life-transaction', the transaction being between Allah and each of his created beings. The life-transaction . . . is universal. It is the way of Islam . . . " The *Muslimeen* and *Mumineen* are Muslims, while the *Mushrikeen* are, literally, "idol worshippers"; in common usage, however, the latter term means "People who associate partners with Allah Ta'ala, such as the Christians, who have raised the Prophet Isa (Jesus, Son of Mary) . . . to the level of Allah." *Kafireen* (or *kuffar*) means "unbelievers."

The song comes from a tape entitled *The Next Level*, produced by the Muslim Youth of North America (MYNA), "an organization dedicated to promoting Islamic awareness in Muslim youth." The lyrics to their songs can be found on their website, *www.mynaraps.com*, and the

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tapes are available in Muslim bookstores across the United States. The second song on *The Next Level* is "Jihad of the Nafs," an anglicization of *Jihad an-Nafs*, which the Islamic glossary defines as "fighting against one's own evil wants and trying one's utmost to be a better person in the sight of Allah." But the lyrics, presented in the style and idiom of gangsta rap, leave a different impression:

This is my Jihad, Jihad of the Nafs,
Battle of the soul against Shaytan
and the rest.

I got my uzi of *Iman*, bazooka of
Qur'an
My M-16 of my *deen* of Islam,
Dropping bombs on Shaytan with
Islam as my main gun,
He telling me to do wrong, I say
"ain't gonna have none
of that." Grenades, yo, of *Taqwa*
on my back,
Bayonet of regret, if I ever get
trapped.
I got the *Sunna* of the Prophet as
my fully automatic.
I've been beaten by the devil many
times and I've had it. . . .

Shaytan and his friends they be
actin' diabolical
Yah, they be slick in the way they
be calling us.
TV, CD, even on the PC,
Shaytan and his friends, yo, they
keep us busy easy
Crazy, if you think you'll win with-
out a plan
But Allah has a plan and this plan
is Islam
Hey yo, Shaytan, yo I know that
you're slick,
But Islam is the bomb, and now I
got some tricks . . .

While some might argue that these lyrics recall St. Paul's admonition to the Ephesians to "put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand" (Ephesians 6:13-18), St. Paul is clearly urging the Christians of Ephesus to defend themselves against spiritual forces, while "The Jihad of the Nafs" seems to encourage warfare against the human "friends" of Shaytan (Satan), in violent language that has taken on added meaning in recent months.

With the possible exception of Cody, all of the children—ranging in age from six to ten—are familiar with the tapes released by MYNA. As they sing, I sense no animosity toward Aaron and me personally; while we find the lyrics disturbing, they see the songs as reflections of their religious duties and their desire to be good Muslims.

As I continue to talk to the students, Aaron examines some videotapes on the wall of the library. Many of them are from the Islamic Propagation Centre International, founded by Muslim scholar Ahmed Deedat and based in Durban, South Africa. On September 16, 2001, the *Sunday Times* of South Africa revealed that Deedat has received millions of dollars from Osama bin Laden's family and has named his headquarters, bought with those donations, after the bin Ladens. Osama bin Laden himself has met several times with Deedat and his son, Yousuf, who, the *Sunday Times* reported, "triggered a storm when he distributed thousands of anti-Semitic handbills featuring a picture of Adolph Hitler during the World Conference Against Racism in Durban . . . " The videotapes sport such titles as *Should Salman Rushdie Die?* (the text on the case makes viewing the tape unnecessary: "The Holy Qu'ran says that any such blasphemer should be killed or crucified, and his hands cut off") and *Crucifixion or Cruci-FICTION?* (Muslims believe that Christ not only did not rise from the dead but was not even crucified).

The children are animated now. Zaid, the son of two doctors who moved their family from Grayling, Michigan, to Rockford so that their children could attend the Iqra School, tells us that his first desire is to memorize the whole Koran and know the meaning of every word in it. The others quickly agree, adding that this is more important than their choice of vocation—though most of them already know that they want to be a doctor or an engineer or a teacher, another striking contrast to their cohorts in public and Christian schools.

Principal Elnoory returns to take us to Miss Erin Felts' fourth- and fifth-grade class. As we bid the children goodbye, Maaz asks us to come visit them again. "And bring some Superman comic books with you," he says, dark eyes twinkling.

Miss Felts is in her first year of teaching at Iqra. A graduate of East High School and Judson College, she is 22 years old. A Covenanter Christian, she is more aware than Miss Swick is of the cultural differences between herself and her students. Miss Felts admits that her family and friends were somewhat surprised by her decision to teach at a Muslim school. But, she says, it has been a wonderful experience. "I've learned a lot about Christianity, Judaism, and their religion, and how similar they are," she says. "The same stories show up in all three." While she is not responsible for teaching the children Islamic studies, Islam permeates her classroom. During writing lessons, the children bring up Islamic topics to use as examples, and she tells them that, while they are learning about paragraphs, she is learning about Islam. And while those who run the school have made no attempt to convert her, "I feel like I'm a part of the Muslim community." The children tell her that they would like her to become a Muslim "so that they can see me in their heaven"—an indication, perhaps, that they find far less similarity between Islam and Christianity than she does.

Shortly after noon, the call to prayer is broadcast over the p.a. system, and we assemble in the mosque. This time, the female students and teachers must stay in an anteroom off of the hallway, where they can hear the prayers but cannot be heard or seen by the males. Aaron and I are joined in the chairs along the wall by three young men in their late teens or early 20's, who—with their long hair, scraggly beards, and stylized "grunge" clothing—look rather out of place. Before the prayers start, young Maaz comes over and tugs on my pant leg. "Who are those guys?" he asks. I tell him that I have never met them before. "Oh," he says, crestfallen, "I thought maybe they were the ones who write *Superman*."

After prayer, we reconvene in the library for lunch—a vegetarian pizza from Papa John's, Mountain Dew, and Coca-Cola—with Principal Elnoory, Magdy Kandil, one of the founders of the Muslim Community Foundation of Rockford, and Khalid Siddiqui, the chairman of the board of the school and the assistant director of the neonatal intensive-care unit at Swedish-American Hospital in Rockford. The three young grungers join us briefly: They are visiting the mosque for the first time, seeking knowledge of Islam, and Kandil is happy to oblige, explaining to them that Muslims believe modern scientific knowledge validates the divine inspiration of the Koran. Flattered by Kandil's attention, they listen attentively, with an openness they

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likely would not extend to a similar argument about the Bible. Motioning in their direction, Elnoory proudly proclaims that, since September 11, the mosque and school have received quite a few visitors interested in Islam.

After the grungers leave, having promised to return soon, Aaron and I explain that, as a practicing Lutheran and an active Catholic, we believe in the necessity of integrating of faith into every aspect of life. But this, Elnoory and Kandil argue, is where Islam has a structural advantage over Christianity in the West today, because, as Elnoory puts it, "Islam is a way of life." In America, where Muslims of all nations have come together, "You get to see more of the life-aspect of Islam"—the universality of Islam and of God. The Muslim community in Rockford "is not a Pakistani community, it is not an Indian community, it is not an Arab community . . . Everyone is on an equal footing."

The school is central to this universalist conception of Islam. Dr. Siddiqui applies his experience as a neonatologist to the school: "To give [the children] self-confidence, you have to give them a structured and sheltered environment." Diversity, he believes, is only good after the brain quits growing, around the age of seven.

Kandil turns the discussion to the role of Muslims in America after September 11. Muslims, he believes, have only recently begun to feel that they can fully participate in American political life, but now "they are a little bit confused about the new laws" and are unsure whether it is safe to exercise freedom of speech. Since September, he argues, there has been a backlash against Islam, which came "from some minority in the U.S. who now feel threatened by a new minority." When I ask him whom he means by the older minority and add that politicians and religious leaders have seemed unusually eager to embrace Islam, Kandil looks at me in disappointment—and, perhaps, with a touch of annoyance. He knows that I know that he means Jews.

Aaron broaches the subject of radical or fundamentalist Islam, and rather than disavow it, Elnoory takes the opposite tack: "We don't even deal with radical Islam, because we do not know what it is." Dr. Siddiqui, who represented the mosque at an interfaith memorial service in Rockford for the victims of the September 11 attacks, uses the image of a pendulum, which can "swing to the extremes and come back to the middle, but you are still within the boundaries" of Islam. Any discussion of radical Islam also depends on your perspective: "You can believe someone is a terrorist, and I don't."

To illustrate his point, Dr. Siddiqui tells us the story of a young Saudi Arabian, who, in the late 70's and early 80's, recognized the dangers of atheistic communism and "went [to Afghanistan] and used his whole wealth to fight." (He is speaking, of course, of Osama bin Laden.) When, as Dr. Siddiqui puts it, this unnamed Saudi was able to do what the United States could not and the Russians were forced to withdraw from Afghanistan, "the CIA interfered and created a very unstable government." Finding themselves "still oppressed by Israel . . . the only way to get out is to fight. Experience says that." With the demise of the Soviet Union, the United States began to look like the oppressor. Attacking America is "a freedom movement from their perspective. When a bomb destroys a man's family, and he returns from work to find a fragment that says 'USA,' how can he think that there is anything good in this country?"

Dr. Siddiqui contrasts America's actions as a superpower with those of Islam: "For 1,000 years, the only superpower in the world was Muslim, but did anyone complain of oppression?" When I mention that Christians in the Balkans might tell a different story, he demurs. "If you have two powers, there is always conflict," he replies.

But what about Muslims in the United States today? If a *jihad* were declared against America, what would they do? This question, Dr. Siddiqui says, has been discussed by Muslim scholars since September 11, and they say that there are two options: Muslims must either renounce their citizenship and go over to the other side, or they must become conscientious objectors. "It may be better to go to jail," Siddiqui argues, because, despite Muslim infighting throughout history, "you cannot kill a fellow Muslim. That is a fundamental of Islam."

Finally, I ask Dr. Siddiqui what he thinks the future of Islam in the United States will be. For instance, do Muslims want to see Islamic law (*sharia*) instituted here? He does not answer the question directly. Law, he says, is supposed to be "beneficial to mankind," but "human history from Adam to now is about the concentration of power. Who has the power made the laws." Since Islam views all men as equal in the sight of Allah, it is wrong for the powerful to make law to their advantage. "Who is superior to us? Only God. If He made the laws, then He can be unbiased." Because of that, he claims, Americans should not fear *sharia*; in fact, "If you look at the Constitution, it is a pure Islamic constitution," restricting the power of men and leaving room for the imposition of *sharia*.

The sun is low in the sky as we say our goodbyes. Dr. Siddiqui give us each a copy of the Koran, and Principal Elnoory shows us to the door, inviting us to return whenever we wish.

On the way back to the office, neither Aaron nor I can think of a comparable Christian school—certainly not one that forms such a central part of a Christian community or prepares young *Mushrikeen* for a coming struggle against the *Muslimeen*. In fact, if there were such a school, how likely is it that there would be an Islamic school in Rockford? Its very presence here is as much an indication of a failure of nerve on the part of Christians as is the more visible mosque that has been erected in Rome. Yet the Rockford Iqra School is only one of over 400 schools in the United States associated with the Iqra Educational Foundation of Chicago (*www.iqra.org*). While mainstream Christianity has beaten a hasty retreat in America for at least the last half-century, Islam has gained a solid foothold—and the Muslims we just spent the day with intend to expand that ground.

As I drive home in the dark, the strains of "Give Me Ya-Allah" keep running through my head, and as I pass Swedish-American Hospital, I flip on the radio to drown them out. The country twang of Alan Jackson fills the car:

> . . . I know Jesus, and I talk to God,
> and I remember this from when I
> was young.
> Faith, hope, and love are some
> good things he gave us,
> and the greatest is love.
>
> *And the greatest is love . . .*

Warning against false prophets, who "come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves," Christ told his followers that "by their fruits ye shall know them." As I pull into my driveway and Alan Jackson's voice fades into the ether, I reflect that fruits are a reliable measure, not only of prophets, but of musicians and teachers as well. ◆

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Letter From Greece

by Bruce Guernsey

Busing to Byzantium

A couple of springs ago, my daughter and I took a bus from Thessaloniki in northern Greece over the mountains to Istanbul. The trip was ghastly. In an effort to save some money, I had found us seats on a local—a big mistake. Despite the promise from the ticket vendor that no smoking was allowed, everyone (including the driver) lit up as soon as we left the station. Twelve hours of unbreathable air, together with the bus stereo turned to its highest decibel with cheap *bouzouki* music, meant a long night. Fortunately, I had brought along plenty to read, including a copy of William Butler Yeats' great poem about his longed-for journey to this same city, but even he could never have imagined the "Fish, flesh, or fowl" of that fumey bus. How my 16-year-old daughter slept through it all, I'll never know.

We arrived in dawn's early smog. My stomach hurt from tension, though hardly as much as it would a little later from the melting ice in a Coke I drank, try as I might not to drink the water those cubes were made of. I had never heard the prayer service from a minaret before, and when I did at 5:00 A.M. while trying to hail a cab, I thought we had landed in the middle of a revolution. I was unnerved by the exotic cry. This was my first visit to a Muslim country, and though I had read about what to expect, the abstract never matches the actual when traveling.

Coughing and inhaling at the same time, our taxi driver squinted through the blue haze from his cigarette at our hotel voucher and nodded knowingly. "See, Dad, everything's going to be all right," said my yawning daughter, dismayed at my distress. She curled up in the back while I doubled up with belly cramps in the front, the authoritative male tourist's place next to the driver. I would make sure he took us there directly, wherever *there* was. All I knew was that we were heading east, the rising sun a mock harvest moon through the opaque air.

The bus terminal was apparently well west of town, or so our driver made it seem as his beat-up Fiat banged along, hitting every pothole he could find, and there were plenty. "This is no cab ride for old men," I whispered to Yeats, especially if they wear dentures—or had, as I did, an immediate need for the bathroom. But off in the distance, there was hope (of an aesthetic kind, at least): I could see a couple of ships on what must have been the Bosphorus, and, in front of them as we grew closer to the city, the silhouetted domes of the first mosques I had ever seen.

"Look at how the light's behind them, Meg—how they look like they have halos." My poetry, however, went unheard—by my daughter anyway, who was out cold. The cabbie, however, nodded once again as if I had given him directions and squealed the wheels sharply left, which, for a moment, had to be north but soon became a thousand-and-one tiny streets and intricate alleys. A Topkapi's worth of Turkish lira later, we pulled in front of the third hotel with the same name as the one I had booked; this time, it was actually ours.

Over the next three days, we received the usual attention a visitor attracts in Istanbul, especially one with a lovely young daughter along. Even small boys had their own business cards and tried to sell us everything from carpets and clothes to whirling-dervish spinning tops. No matter where we went, youthful men would trail us around, offering to be our guides, but I suspect they were more interested in my dollars or my daughter than in improving their English. "Hey, honey, remember me from Honolulu?" we would hear, wandering the endless and famous bazaar, its maze of pathways glistening with trinkets, aglow with false gold.

It took Meg little time to realize she was outnumbered. Where are the women, she wanted to know, or the girls her own age? We saw very few as we wandered about; when we did, their faces and hair were always covered. "Not a good place to buy lipstick," she concluded, half laughing but a little scared, too. Even with her long yellow locks tied in a bun and blue jeans changed for a shapeless skirt, I could have returned home with any number of camels in trade.

From both exhaustion and timidity, we didn't go out at night and spent the evenings in the hotel bar with the other tourists who gathered there for the same reasons. Mostly from Germany and Japan but from India and South Africa as well, everyone, in varieties of English, told much the same story: Istanbul is a fascinating city, but quit trying to sell us something! It seemed that lipstick was about the only thing not for sale.

The bottle of Budweiser in front of me and the McDonald's just down the street led me to think that the ambitious people of this city were not the only capitalists around, ardent as they were. I was at the end of a year's appointment as a Fulbright professor in Greece and had seen plenty of evidence of aggressive sales there as well. It's hard to walk through the Plaka in Athens and not come out the other side with something shiny in your otherwise empty pocket.

The history of trade is as deep there as it is in Turkey, a common bond for these ancient enemies. In fact, most of the Greeks on that awful bus trip had come to Istanbul to shop; come to think of it, I had also bargained our route east. Laying down your weapons to pick up your packages has become the contemporary way of making peace, as nations have given way to corporations. Maybe there are no nations anymore, and all we care about is buying and selling: the sovereign State of Nike; the independent Country of Coke. And here in Istanbul, the kids start early, like that little boy this morning, that eight-year-old who spoke perfect English, the child we thought was so cute. He was hawking his small carpets outside the Suliman Mosque, right in its shadow.

Those evenings in the bar nursing a brew gave me the chance to ruminate and to skim over guidebooks and histories. No doubt, the kind of commercialism we had all been experiencing was part of Istanbul's great past and had been since the Bosphorus first flowed between the Sea of Marmara and the Black—and that's a long time. But so, too, had the life of the spirit been the center of this crossroad of faiths, and I was beginning to wonder where the sense of worship had gone. Those timeless eyes in the gold mosaics of Hagia Sophia: Could they be found anywhere outside that once-holy

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sphere, itself now neither cathedral nor mosque but a pay-as-you-enter museum? And the silent poetry of the Blue Mosque's lyrical designs? It was quickly gone when we stepped from that holy silence into the honking of taxis and hoots of horny men. Where was the spirit of this eternal city? Where was its soul? The answer, my friend, was blowin' in the wind.

At the bar each night was a singer who came on for an hour or so, strumming a guitar and singing Bob Dylan songs but with a sweeter voice than Bobby Zimmerman ever had. A son of the 60's myself, I was at first amused, then gradually taken in; my daughter, part of the new Grateful Dead generation, was enthralled. No one else in the place paid any attention, chatting away the whole time he sang, but Meg and I knew the tunes and crooned along quietly. The young singer never looked our way, even though, with our obvious interest and our being the only Americans in the small crowd, I thought he might, the way we Americans manage to find one another wherever we go, like it or not. Apparently, he didn't like it, since he never made eye contact with us until our last night in Turkey.

Once again, my daughter and I were the only ones who clapped, and after he had set down his guitar and unleashed his harmonica, he took a small package from under his seat and headed our way. All kinds of thoughts went through my head. He looks like a college kid; I wonder where? Maybe he wants to share some carpet stories, talk American to American. Let me guess his name—he looks more like a Robert than a Bob. But he didn't say a word, or sing one, either. He barely looked at us as he handed me the package. I asked him if he would like to have a beer—they even have Bud Light, I said—but he didn't respond. He hardly understood, in fact, and well he couldn't.

This Bob Dylan didn't speak English. Oh, maybe a word or two—"geeft," he kept mumbling, "geeft"—but as we found out later, he had memorized the lyrics of all the songs he sang so well and had no idea what they meant. Somehow, "The Times They Are A-Changin'" and "Blowin' in the Wind" had a meaning that he sensed rather than actually understood, the way a child learns gesture and tone long before definition. And indeed, he stood before us like a child, the first shy one we had seen in Istanbul.

He kept pointing toward the package wrapped in a paper bag. "I think he wants you to open it," Megan said, as bewildered by his silence as I and expecting what I did: yet another thing to buy. I opened it anyway, only to find one of the loveliest gifts I've ever been given: In pastel pinks and blues, before our eyes was a watercolor of a mosque at sunrise, shimmering in the early light like a vision. And on the Bosphorus in the foreground, a delicate sailboat, silent through the lapping waves, its two stick-figure passengers on their quiet way, perhaps to the Black Sea or, like my daughter and me, back to Greece or wherever home happened to be. "Geeft," was all he said and wouldn't take a penny or even the actual lira I offered him, which made me ashamed of myself the moment I did.

He painted it himself, the fluent clerk explained as we were checking out. He had even framed it, and despite the horrible ride back to Thessaloniki—poor Megan had the melted-ice-cube distress this time—I felt a wholeness inside each of the many times I took it out in the sooty bus. He was aware of us the entire time, I realized. I guess he was grateful

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that someone had heard his voice, had paid attention to the songs that must have taken so long for him to learn. But what a jerk I am, I kept thinking, trying to pay him. I'm as programmed as everyone else.

The painting hangs in my house as I write this, a treasure without a price—a moment, that is, but one that nonetheless sings "of what is past, or passing, or to come," as Yeats has sung about the city's "Monuments of unaging intellect." But the lyrics of this painted song are far more simple: no "gold enamelling," just little watery lines of color. When my own checkbook and credit cards and those voices on the phone trying to sell me something make me feel like a cash machine, I look up at this paper mosaic and sail away "To the holy city of Byzantium."

Bruce Guernsey is a professor of English at Eastern Illinois University.

Letter From Venice

by Andrei Navrozov

Masked Ambition

◆

It is now Carnival. If you look at Venetian painting, where it is a recurrent theme, very occasionally among the profusion of masks and costumes worn by the revelers you will spot the fool's cap, the jester's conical hat decorated with bells or pom-poms. Nowadays, the hat, sold on every street corner in a variety of colors and shapes throughout the winter, is without doubt the most conspicuous ornament of the day tourist, rather like the baseball cap in summertime. Foolishness is now *comme il faut* even among the working classes, and the louts descending on Venice in their hundreds of thousands are nothing if not conformist. On another social level, the court jester of today masquerades in Armani and pays full menu price with an American Express card for his plate of reheated tortellini at Harry's Bar.

At the Teatro Goldoni the other night, it occurred to me that the old classical *commedia dell'arte*, which the Venetian playwright Carlo Goldoni appropriated, refined, and eventually supplanted, is no more a caricature of life than Monty Python. This makes me wonder whether one need not to have lived in Labourist Britain to appreciate that the Dead Parrot and the Ministry of Silly Walks are less lighthearted comic routines than vivid fragments of a comprehensive social puzzle that, were it ever fully assembled, would not look out of place in the work of a modern Dickens or Tolstoy. The pet-shop sales assistant who does not want to sell parrots and dreams instead of roaming the woods as a lumberjack is not so much a whimsical figure of fun as the living and breathing lout of the very sort that now predominates among the not-so-young in the more prosperous nations of the world. As for the ministry in question—from whose exalted eminence men with names like Wim Kok can now teach 300 million sales assistants *manqué* to dream strange dreams of liberty, leisure, and golden apples "where below another sky, parrot islands anchored lie"—it has, of course, opened for business in Brussels.

Nothing better illustrates the intense realism of old Italian character comedy—at least in its deservedly famous Venetian refraction—than the absurd harlequinade, which finally concluded in December to thunderous applause from an appreciative audience on both sides of the Grand Canal, that was my search for a new apartment to move to from Palazzo Mocenigo. Last summer, after a whole year of hopeful intrigue and angry entreaty, I finally crowed victory upon persuading the elderly, deaf, and vague owner of a suitably picturesque palazzo in S. Stae, across the Canal from the Casinò di Venezia, to sign the magical "*quattro più quattro*," the rent-stabilized residential lease that permits the tenant to occupy the premises effectively until his demise. Italian tenancy laws being what they are, only an elderly, deaf, and vague landlord would sign away his ancestral home to a total stranger almost certain to outlive him, and hence the only kind of legal arrangement on offer to foreigners here is the dud, one-year, market-pegged, tourist-accommodation lease that I, and the equally unfortunate Lord Byron before me, had at the Mocenigo.

I crowed prematurely, because when we signed in June, the S. Stae apartment was still occupied by the newly elected mayor of Venice and his recently acquired wife. As far as I was concerned, this humorless and somewhat lumpy provincial politico was just a sitting tenant and a nuisance. Actually, he was there to help his ambitious new wife instruct the inhabitants of the city in highly important civic tasks, such as how to hold pigeons at bay without excessive cruelty to their persons, how to round off currency conversions from the laughably kaput Italian lira to the impeccably modern euro, and generally how to become better bootlickers—I mean, citizens—of the European Community. And while it may well be that Signor Costa had been elected to his high post for a variety of tolerably valid reasons, on the basis of my personal experience I would be disinclined to believe that Signora Costa's youthful charm, natural simplicity, and disinterested kindness had been among them.

The first strategic decision jointly taken by Venice's first couple was to terminate their lease at Palazzo Duodo. A 14th-century Gothic palazzo, "no mod cons"—near the spot where Goldoni was born and round the corner from the churches of S. Giacomo dell' Orio, with Veronese's *Faith, Hope, and Charity* over the sacristy door, and S. Cassiano, with Tintoretto's *Descent Into Hell* in the chancel—is most emphatically *not* a good address for the Modern Man who is an Important Figure with a Possible Future in European Politics, to say nothing of the Man with a Roman Wife who is Hell on Wheels. In Venetian *commedia dell'arte*, the self-important and loquacious *petit-bourgeois* Pantalone hails from the Giudecca. It made perfect sense, therefore, that Venice's newest grandee and his missus were to move from S. Stae to a new, exclusive, and conspicuously modern condominium on the island, which was to be completed sometime in the summer.

But come summer, strangely enough for the Modern Man with an Important Wife who had tirelessly campaigned on the promise of rebuilding La Fenice on time and under budget, Pantalone's condominium was no more ready for occupancy than the charred remains of Italy's favorite theater: not in July, not in August, not in September. Whereupon Mrs. Pantalone, though less touched by my homeless family's plight than by the plight of homeless families elsewhere (in Afghanistan, for instance), took decisive action to avoid the political scandal that would almost certainly have unfolded if our elderly, deaf, and vague landlord had taken the case to the local newspaper. She handed me the keys to a three-room

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office her husband was keeping in the same palazzo, with a benediction to the effect that I was welcome to whatever shelter this offered.

Reminiscent of the *commedia dell' arte* skit "*La Casa Stregata*," or "The Jinxed House," the production of the ensuing comedy calls for a split-level stage. Pantalone is told by the doctor that he is ill and must take a house in the country for a change of air. The miserly Pantalone remembers at once that he owns a place in Castello—in Monopoly terms, this is like remembering that you own a tenement in the Bronx—which is rented to Arlecchino. He throws out the hapless ingenue and, looking forward to his *petit-bourgeois* lungs devouring all that free Castello air, moves in himself. Whereupon Arlecchino's friends come together to persuade Pantalone that the house is haunted, and night after night he is forced to pay the princely sum of four *zecchini* to the psychologically astute Brighella playing the scary ghost.

On the upper level, Pantalone contemplates the fate of Venice's pigeons and the future of the euro while Mrs. Pantalone stirs away at the cocktail of his political ambition, one part Mother Teresa to six parts Lady Macbeth. On the lower level, Arlecchino and friends plot ghostly revenge on the infernal couple. Pulcinella, the owner of the palazzo, and all the comic *zanni* run back and forth between the two levels, scrambling on top of one another like the famous Brustolon angels on the vase supports in the grand ballroom of Ca' Rezzonico, tripping over the furniture and falling over in unimaginably funny ways.

After more than three months of such slapstick, a veritable fool's cap on more than a year of agonized pantomime that preceded it, imagine my relief when, one dark day in late November, *deus* finally came out of the *macchina da caffè* to intervene on the side of the downtrodden. Over an espresso in Campo S. Luca, a friend of mine, young Hugues L—, told me of a family house of theirs, Palazzo Contarini-Michiel, that was in the process of being vacated by the Greek consul in Venice after some 20 years of neglectful occupation. And yes, his father would let me have the same "*quattro più quattro*" that the consul had.

The 15th-century palazzo stands on the Grand Canal next to Ca' Rezzonico, the very grand house where Robert Browning lived and died, and it is under its roof, needless to say—because this is Italy, where every good *commedia dell'arte* plot must always have the happy ending conducive to healthy digestion—that I am now writing this proclamation of final and quite irreversible triumph. When I told Lady Pantalone that I had made other arrangements and was no longer in need of her ambiguous hospitality, the copperplate Roman look on the blank of her ivory-laid face was recompense enough for the eternity I had spent in addressless anguish. Curtain, applause, polenta for the actors.

Andrei Navrozov is Chronicles' *European correspondent.*

Letter From Belgium

by Tomislav Sunic

The Coming Belgoslavia?

◆

What was meant to grow separately cannot last long as an artificial whole. This prehistoric wisdom seems to be forgotten by advocates of multiculturalism—which is just a misleading euphemism for polyethnism and multiracialism. The unpredictable side of multiracial conviviality seems to be deliberately overlooked by political elites in multiethnic and multiracial Belgium, a miniscule country that has recently been rocked by pedophile scandals in the lofty corners of high politics. Its venerable royal court, under King Albert, and the liberal-leftist coteries in power have found themselves popularly referred to as the "Chester Molesters in charge of running Belgoslavia."

The separatist-minded Flemings also derisively dub the Belgian state "the last Soviet republic." There may be some truth to that appellation, and not just because Brussels is the site of the Ceausescu-style building that houses the E.U. eurocrats. The Belgian postal authorities have recently produced a stamp with Lenin's face on it. That which would be violently rejected in the more virile post-communist Balkans or Russia seems to enjoy market value among the political class and socialist trade unions in this artificial state. By contrast, any minor and inoffensive joke against the rising tide of illegal Asian immigrants, or any criticism of the Asian and Albanian drug dealers who have invaded Antwerp, can get you into legal trouble and earn you the label of a racist right-winger.

A complicated coalition government, elected on a proportional basis, runs the country. Belgium has two parliaments but refuses to accept the Flemings as a separate and distinct ethnic group within the clearly defined federal republic. Instead, the leftist-controlled media refer to the Flemings as the "Dutch-speaking residents of Belgium residing in the 'region' of Flandres." The phrase "*region de Flanders*" is in every politician's mouth. In the early 1970's, the Flemings, after a century-long legal (and often violent) fight, had managed to win a great deal of linguistic and cultural autonomy, but Francophile Jacobinism still lurks everywhere. The pro-government media quickly rebukes as racism any sign of Flemish separatism or nationalist sentiment.

The towering irony is that the Flemings are not an ethnic minority in Belgium. They represent the absolute majority, totaling 6.6 million residents. Unlike the 3.5 million French-speaking Belgian Walloons, who are located in the southern half of Belgium, the Flemings have a more pronounced sense of national identity and cultural distinctiveness, which cannot be solely attributed to their Germanic roots or their distinct language. For over a century, Flanders has been part and parcel of a larger entity, and most Flemings, regardless of their political credo, reject centralism, which has been exported to them by neighboring France since the 14th century. Within this context, we can understand why the so-called right-wing nationalist Vlaams Blok has a rather poor and awkward relationship with Jean-Marie le Pen's Front National in France. The party is, however, rather supportive of the separatist Quebeçois in Canada and shows no hesitation in backing the autonomy of Northern Ireland or the Basques. In France, on both the right and left wings of the political spectrum, hardly anyone questions the centralized structure of the French state.

That is not the case in Flanders, which nurtures a strong central-European, confederalist, and quasi-imperial attitude toward former bits and pieces of the defunct Habsburg Empire. The Belgian government, eager to show its politically correct credentials, was in the forefront of the condemnation two years ago of the alleged xenophobia of Austria's Jörg

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Haider. Flemish nationalists quickly responded to the Belgians' undiplomatic posturing. The Vlaams Blok loudly sided with Haider's beleaguered FPO party and his coalition government, rapidly dispatching truckloads of Flemish youngsters to mountainous Austrian Corinthia on skiing holidays.

The Flemings' pro-Central European inclinations are firmly grounded in history. During the Flemish-born Charles V's reign, Flanders became part of the vast, confederal Holy Roman Empire, whose longevity and solid structure overshadows the nebulous Soviet-inspired European Union. The Holy Roman Empire's main goal was to chase the Turks out of Europe and to keep the Turkish ally in the West—treacherous proto-Jacobin France—from crossing the Rhine River. The terrorist artillery bombardment of Brussels by Louis XIV is often cited among Flemings as a warning against any rapprochement with France. By the end of the 17th century, while Louis XIV was realizing his aggressive dreams in the west, Flemish volunteers, along with thousands of Central European fighters under the charismatic Prince Eugene of Savoy, were desperately trying to stem the Turkish tide in Central Europe. Even today, Flemings harbor a great deal of sympathy for the Habsburg Empire and its mythic queen Maria Theresa. Not surprisingly, Flemish nationalists were among the first to flock to the aid of Croatia after Croatia's proclamation of independence in 1991. The Walloons, as well as the neighboring French, were not happy with the dissolution of multiethnic Yugoslavia. Its breakup vividly reminded them of their own historical miscreants.

A foreigner must be cautious in addressing a Flemish passerby in French. A Fleming will feign ignorance and play dumb, although he may speak perfect French. Yet, when approached by a foreign tourist, he will immediately start speaking fluently in both English and German and will escort the tourist to the next village and show hospitality. Even a simple Flemish garbage collector gets by in three different languages. In Wallonia, it is a miracle to encounter a public official who speaks a word of Dutch, let alone one who can stutter broken English or mutter some German words.

Although smaller nations are seldom enamored of their big neighbors, Flemish nationalists are amicable toward Germany. Their overtly warm ties to Germany during the past century have led to setbacks in their quest for independence. They are immediately called "former Nazi collaborators" by leftist journalists each time the Vlaams Blok makes some politically incorrect statement. And while the Flemings speak the same language as the neighboring Dutch (and despite the fact that Flanders was, from 1816 to 1830, part of the larger United Kingdom of the Netherlands), they do not have pronounced affection for the Dutch. Their Catholic tradition and their baroque mentality have separated them from their Protestant and mercantile next-door neighbors. An important figure from the Vlaams Blok Youth, lawyer Karim Van Overmeire, told me that the Flemings reject with horror the permissiveness and decadence of the Dutch and cannot accept their tolerance for drug consumption.

This is not to say that the Flemings are pious Catholic believers. In fact, the Vlaams Blok includes a considerable number of agnostics and pagans among its ranks. At political gatherings, you seldom see a Catholic priest—as is almost always the case in Croatia—pontificating on the virtue of global brotherhood or multiracialism. Flemish nationalists, unlike other European nationalists, have also avoided clannish nationalism and party intrigues, which have been a hallmark of Umberto Bossi's Lega Nord in Italy and Le Pen's Front National.

The greatest weapon that Flemish nationalists wield in their quest for more autonomy is their thriving economy, built on their exceptional service industry, which is the best in Western Europe. The Flemings could easily bail out of Belgium, but the Walloons, whose work ethic is poor and whose corrupted politicians and trade unions have become addicted to generous Flemish subsidies, could not. A prominent Flemish scholar of Hinduism, Dr. Koenraad Elst, who is also critical of "Belgoslavia," summarized the psychology of the Walloons in one curt sentence: "The debtors always hate their creditors." Until 1970, the Walloons had run the Belgian military and diplomatic show, but their economic clout began to fade by the late 70's. Wallonia—which had been, since the Industrial Revolution, the main European location of industry—lies barren and destitute today. Closed-down factories in the cities of Liege and Charleroi, decorated by throngs of idle and destitute Arab youth, look like they belong in Third World countries.

By contrast, the Flemings—who, until the early 1950's, were held in contempt and often derided by Walloon high bourgeoisie as lowly proles who are only good for milking cows and shoveling horse dung—have surpassed the Walloons in wealth. Flanders' economic growth has been on the order of 2.5 to 3.2 percent annually over the past decade, while the growth in Wallonia has not exceeded 1.9 percent during the same period. The number of unemployed in Flanders stands at 4.9 percent of the population; in Wallonia, it is a staggering 15 percent. Flanders accounts for 86 percent of the country's exports. A major point of contention is the centralized social-security system and government-run pension funds, whose prime benefactors are Walloons. Flemish fiscal transfers to Wallonia are about 120 billion Belgian francs annually (approximately three billion U.S. dollars). In other words, each Flemish family pays over $500 per month in welfare to Wallonia.

Along with the historical and cultural gap between these two peoples, the economic arguments seem reason enough to write the country off the map. This may not be easy, considering that the European Union chose the tiny multiethnic and multiracial Belgium as its Politburo. Only when Belgium begins balkanizing into Euroslavia will some eurocrat in Brussels likely start scratching himself behind the ear. As in the case of the former Yugoslavia, it may be too late.

Tomislav Sunic, a writer and former Croat diplomat, resides in Europe.

Letter From Texas

by Wayne Allensworth

Christmas, Texas

◆

I am fumbling in the console, looking for my Jim Reeves Christmas CD, when I notice the wall of rolling, gray clouds approaching from the east. The sun is sliding slowly beneath the horizon in the west, shooting shards of orange-red hues into the purple-blue sky, presenting a striking contrast to the dark gray wall, fading into black in its core, bearing down on us like a biblical judgment.

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It is Christmas Eve, and I am on the road, heading south from Ft. Worth to a family gathering in central Texas.

My kids are sleeping, and my wife fades in and out, dozing in the beautiful half-light of the evening. I am alone to listen, to see, and to think. The sight of approaching judgment prompts me to envision the massive, rolling wall as one of Pharaoh's charioteers watching the Red Sea prepare to swallow him. Even so, Gentlemen Jim's music (*Long time ago in Bethlehem, so the Holy Bible says . . .*) eases my apprehension. And the storm never came.

That night, we share a Christmas spread with my wife's extended family and play a little game: Each of us draws a number for an anonymous gift. But the game doesn't end there. After each gift is opened, the next person in line can either risk the luck of the draw or good-naturedly force a previous recipient to hand over a particularly desirable present, prompting a fresh exchange. My wife wisely hangs on to a Shop Vac, a gift that will likely prove useful in a family with three kids and a dog.

Afterward, a kindly uncle asks about a close relation who has been diagnosed with cancer. His inquiry takes me by surprise: I've been preoccupied with my own selfish concerns and had almost forgotten about it. I thank him for his concern—and remember a painful moment from years before, when I had forgotten about the death of a boyhood friend's father. My youngest daughter, her sweet face illuminated by the lights of the Christmas tree, begins singing a hymn of the Christ Child, and all fall silent to listen and watch. Somehow, I find the prospect of her salvation much more believable than of my own.

On Christmas Day, we enjoy an abundant dinner, and the family, as is traditional in these parts, retires to the kitchen table for a game of dominos. Some appear to consider this a contact sport, so I choose to sit this one out.

I can't shake the melancholy that overtook me the day before. It's evening, but the sun is peeking out again, so I decide to take a walk in the breezy, brisk, 40-something degree air of this little town, retracing a walk I took years before down Pecan Street by the creek that runs parallel to Railroad Street, with a park sandwiched in between.

I walk down the cracked pavement of Pecan Street, strolling along the creek lined with its namesake trees, looking at the modest little homes bedecked in an equally modest array of Christmas lights, Nativity scenes, and merry Santas. The post-September 11 flags are everywhere—on the cars, flying from the homes, and decorating the rusting bumpers of what we used to call, tongue-in-cheek, "cowboy Cadillacs." (One pickup's sticker defiantly proclaims "Don't Burn This Flag!")

Over on Railroad Street, the railroad is gone, leaving behind a battered Santa Fe boxcar and the ghostly remnants of a feed mill—the ruins of a bygone civilization, there to remind us that our small towns, like the people who inhabit them, are fading away. But the little homes are full tonight; the young people are back, and the old ones smile again and remember.

It may have been Gentlemen Jim's music that eventually took the edge off my gloomy mood. Sitting in the car a few days later, waiting on my wife to run an errand, I push the button on the CD player, and that mellow voice brings Jim back from the sweet by-and-by (*May the good Lord bless and keep you . . .*), then reminds us of why the Christ Child was born (*Dear Lord, forgive . . .*). Suddenly, everything's all right; the shadow has lifted from my soul as swiftly as it had descended days before.

The cold snap hasn't ended, but outside, the thick, gray clouds have broken, so I step out to watch the sun arch westward in a halo of glowing cotton puffs. A fat little sparrow bounces on the limbs of a leafless post oak, then flits over to light on an evergreen cedar.

Wayne Allensworth resides in Keller, Texas, and always listens to Jim Reeves at Christmas time.

Letter From the Upper Midwest

by Sean Scallon

Sans Frontiers?

◆

"What is the purpose of your journey to Canada and how long do you plan to stay?"

That is the question anyone traveling across the Canadian border has to answer to the border guards, no matter where he crosses. For myself, it was at the Pigeon River (which divides Minnesota and Ontario near the beautiful Grand Portage/Mt. Josephine area) on my way to Thunder Bay, the last leg of my summer vacation.

If predictions from the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace come true, such border crossings would no longer exist. The U.S-Canadian border, which 200 million people (according to estimates) cross every year and through which one billion dollars in trade flows every 12 months, will simply cease to be—"disappear before any politician finds the political courage to negotiate its removal," according to Demetrios Papademetriou, one of the authors of a recent study conducted by Carnegie.

I spotted a story on the study on the bottom half of the front page of the *National Post* while having drinks in the Valhalla Hotel's bar and lounge, in an attempt to unwind after a three-hour drive from Duluth and a morning rendezvous with a wonderful hotel clerk. Canadian newspapers and magazines carry many stories on globalization and nationalism, far more than you would find in a U.S. newspaper and written in a more studious and serious tone. If Canadians read this story seriously, they would have cause for alarm. If there were no border between the United States and Canada, then there would be no Canada: It would be absorbed into the United States.

How different are Canadians and Americans? Travel down the main drag of Thunder Bay, and you will find strip malls, supermarkets, travel lodges, housing projects, and Third World immigrants—not much different from what you would find in Duluth, just with a Canadian face. Instead of Burger King and McDonald's, you will see Robin's Donuts and Tim Horton's restaurants. Safeway replaces Wal-Mart. Inter-City Mall dominates the shopping district the way American malls do. Thunder Bay's Main Street is as Disneyfied as any you might find in a midsized Midwestern city.

There is one subtle difference, however. Years ago, Duluth turned a strip of land that juts out into the Lake Superior bay into a theme park of hotels, restaurants, shops, and office buildings. Warehouses and shipping companies now hold bookstores, brewpubs, apartment lofts, and gift shops. Along the lakefront, there is a convention center, an IMAX theater, and a new aquarium. The train

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depot is still a train depot, but the train just conducts scenic journeys around the Lake Superior shoreline, and the depot itself is a museum. All of the ore docks, the grain bins, and the coal and cement storage fields are tucked away and hidden in the back of the Duluth-Superior harbor, as if they were embarrassing reminders of what Duluth once was (and still, for the most part, is): an industrial town with a commercial port that does a lot of business.

Yet somebody forgot to tell the tourists. You could find hardy souls sitting out in the rain at 9:30 P.M. or in the cold, gray dawn of 6:00 A.M., waiting for freighters to come in. What is one of the more popular tourist activities in the canal district? A tour through an old U.S. Steel ore freighter, the S.S. *William S. Irvin*.

Thunder Bay doesn't have that kind of playground—yet. You can't see the Lake Superior harbor until you get to the other end of town, and that's only a small marina and park. In between are the railroad yards, grain bins, and ore docks of the city's industrial heart. Of course, if the border disappears, American planners and developers may want to prepare the wrecking ball and earthmover.

I quickly picked up an appreciation for Canadian publications, some of which dare to tackle the topic of globalization. One story in the *National Post*, written by Niall Ferguson, questioned whether democracy actually creates prosperity. Another profiled leftist antiglobalist Noam Chomsky (ignored at home but taken seriously up north), while a third was an investigative report of a Tamil refugee organization in Toronto that funnels guns and money to its rebel brothers in Sri Lanka. (Police believe that there are at least 8,000 Tamil Tiger guerrillas in Toronto itself, about half the size of the current Canadian army.) Contrast this with what you would find in the Duluth paper, the *News and Tribune*, which published an Associated Press story about how Somali immigrants are having a wonderful time in their little houses on the prairie near Fargo, North Dakota. Why Fargo, of all places? Well, it's quieter than Mogadishu, and the Somalis believe the residents of Fargo have some of that wonderfully trite conservative notion of "family values." (Don't doubt for a minute that they are telling all their friends and family back in the refugee camps about the family values they just discovered in the Upper Midwest.) No ordinary citizen of Fargo was interviewed about what he thought of the empire's flotsam and jetsam washing up on our shores.

Another AP gem right next to the fish-out-of-water story was an announcement from a recent globalist conference held at the Universal Academy of Cultures, headed by Nobel laureate Elie Wiesel. The resolve of this gathering was to "better hear the cries of the world," as Wiesel put it. Aristide R. Zolberg of the International Center of Migration, Ethnicity and Citizenship at the New School for Social Research was more blunt: "It's no longer a world where there are some 'us' and the rest 'others.' We can no longer turn our backs and say 'these are not my people.'" To whom was he referring? The article, like much of the AP's drivel, does not provide details.

All of this goes to show that Canadians often ponder the question of nationhood and identity, while Americans give it a wink and a grin. North of the border, at least, citizens ask questions: Who am I? How do I define myself? What is my place in the world? Profound, to be sure, but necessary inquiries in a world in which your borders are being threatened by think tanks. A Canadian TV commercial depicts a youth who, over stirring, patriotic music (*à la* George Patton), reads a list of what Canadians are and are not to those snotty Americas who think Canadians are nothing but Americans who would rather be dull than hip.

Despite the invasion of American culture from radio and TV stations in Seattle, Duluth, Detroit, Cleveland, Buffalo, and Rochester, Anglo-Canadians cling to what makes them Canadian: loyalty to Great Britain. Queen Elizabeth is still on their dollar bills, and Canada is still a commonwealth. Newspapers ran in-depth stories on Prince William's coming of age. The sports sections feature stories on England's play in the Euro soccer championship, the NHL draft, and the Formula One Canadian Grand Prix. American sporting news—coverage of Major League Baseball, in which Canadian teams in Toronto and Montreal play—was buried in the back pages. Back at the Valhalla, something called the Society of St. George held a dinner and pageant the evening I was there, and Thunder Bay is dotted with Royal Canadian Legion posts. Leading candidates for the 2001 general election never seriously talked about getting rid of the country's troubled government-financed health-care system, because it is viewed as a unique Canadian institution.

How would such institutions survive without a border to define them? They wouldn't. The destruction of the border would mean the collapse of the Canadian dollar, as merchants would attempt to get their hands on *real* dollars, just as the waiter at a restaurant where I dined was eager for a tip from a tourist that would be worth more than one from a local. Canadian hockey teams, perpetually strapped for cash, would find it easier to move south to, say, Biloxi, Mississippi. Anything remotely Anglican would die along with the old folks. The health-care system would fall down when patients tired of waiting for surgery headed south to American clinics in even greater numbers. American society would not tolerate Quebec's language police or its French dictums, so it would either become independent or be taken out by smart bombs.

The traffic wouldn't be one way, either. Canada has done much, thanks to former Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, to pioneer the multicultural society, and a few ideas would filter south. Every government sign you see is in both French and English. There are separate English, French, and Spanish television stations on my hotel's cable package, and it seems every ethnic group has its own Sunday morning show. Black Entertainment Television and Unavision wouldn't survive competition in the States from something like Tagalog TV, or HmongVision, or the SBC (Somali Broadcast Company, based out of Fargo, North Dakota.)

If there are no international boundaries, why are there provincial boundaries? Why do we need state boundaries? Is anarchy really good for the soul? Globalists never ask these questions because they assume that all people are the same, and, therefore, all systems are the same. Canadians may not be all that different from Americans in what they eat, drink, wear, watch, or worship, but they do have different ways of doing things, different ways of governing, different ways of looking at themselves. That's why Canadian Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs George Haynal dismissed the Carnegie study with the back of his hand, stating in the *National Post* article: "The border is necessary for the preservation of identity and security." That is something Americans should ponder.

Sean Scallon is a reporter from East Ellsworth, Wisconsin.

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by Srdja Trifkovic

State of the Union: An Empire, Not a Republic

President Bush's recent State of the Union Address was an historic occasion. His speechwriting staff went through nearly 30 drafts and finally presented him (and the rest of us) with a mature ideological framework that reflects the balance of outlooks within the present administration. The preceding debate may have been the last chance for any remaining republicans (small "r") within the national-security team to raise their voices and insert certain qualifications into what has emerged as the "Bush doctrine," but this did not happen. The neoconservative policy of permanent global interventionism has triumphed.

In addition to "ridding the world of thousands of terrorists" in Afghanistan, the U.S. military had "saved a people from starvation and freed a country from brutal oppression." Its women "were captives in their own homes, forbidden from working or going to school, while now they are free, and take part in Afghanistan's new government," all of which is "a tribute to the spirit of the Afghan people, to the resolve of our coalition and to the might of the United States military."

The President was vague concerning the estimated number of terrorists still at large, but "our war against terror is only beginning" and will cover the whole world, because

> Thousands of dangerous killers, schooled in the methods of murder, often supported by outlaw regimes, are now spread throughout the world like ticking time bombs, set to go off without warning . . . tens of thousands of trained terrorists are still at large. These enemies view the entire world as a battlefield, and we must pursue them wherever they are . . . freedom is at risk and America and our allies must not, and will not, allow it.

The list of enemies also includes "regimes who seek chemical, biological or nuclear weapons" and "at least a dozen countries" that offer refuge to "a terrorist underworld." Three countries in particular are "threatening America or our friends and allies with weapons of mass destruction": North Korea, Iran, and Iraq. These "constitute an axis of evil, arming to threaten the peace of the world." America will have to act, and she welcomes friends and allies in that endeavor, "but some governments will be timid in the face of terror. And make no mistake about it: If they do not act, America will."

To handle the threat, the United States must "develop and deploy effective missile defenses to protect America and our allies from sudden attack." In addition, we will *preempt* any possible threat. President Bush "will not wait on events while dangers gather" and "peril draws closer and closer." The job may not be finished on our watch, he said, "yet it must be and it will be waged on our watch." This task is transcendentally ordained: "History has called America and our allies to action, and it is both our responsibility and our privilege to fight freedom's fight." All of this will require an enormous amount of money, more than anything spent on defense even at the height of the Cold War, but "while the price of freedom and security is high, it is never too high. Whatever it costs to defend our country, we will pay."

The President invited Americans to commit two years of their life to the new USA Freedom Corps: "America will continue to depend on the eyes and ears of alert citizens . . . We want to be a Nation that serves goals larger than self." The final goal is "a just and peaceful world beyond the war on terror," and America will "lead by defending liberty and justice because they are right and true and unchanging for all people everywhere." She will "always stand firm for the nonnegotiable demands of human dignity . . ." And "real" Islam is an ally in this bold endeavor: "Let the skeptics look to Islam's own rich history—with its centuries of learning, and tolerance, and progress."

All of this, according to President Bush, is to be based on a deeper understanding of the world and our purpose in it: "We've come to know truths that we will never question: Evil is real, and it must be opposed . . . Rarely has the world faced a choice more clear or consequential."

What does all this mean?

Afghanistan has been saved from starvation and brutal oppression, and its women are free. That is wonderful, except that none of this was among the stated objectives of the military operation: to punish and neutralize those responsible for September 11. The embarrassing failure to capture or track Osama bin Laden (who was not mentioned once in the President's speech), his key aides, and their leading Taliban allies is now covered up by the allegedly splendid results of America's new role as the harbinger of progress and empowerer of the underprivileged around the world.

By throwing at his audience vastly different figures about the number of terrorists still at large, the President has created the impression that the actual numbers no longer matter. Precision is essential if you are planning a limited response calibrated to the magnitude of the threat, of course, but the numbers can become blurred if you are planning an unlimited and open-ended global campaign. Judging by President Bush's treatment of those numbers—which he magnified tenfold from one sentence to another—this is no longer a focused operation against a clearly defined threat. In practical terms, this means that the intelligence community now has a bureaucratic incentive to keep its estimates on the wild side. Once all measurable parameters give way to nebulae, and "terrorism" joins "poverty," "racism," "injustice," etc., in the repertoire of ills that will nev-

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er be eradicated but must be fought, the fight will be perpetual.

Sixty years ago, we had the original Axis, and it took the rest of the world five years to break it. Until 1989, we had the Evil Empire, and it took five decades of determined effort on the part of the Free World to bring it down. How exactly the latest blended metaphor applies to the three countries named by the President is unclear. They are certainly not allies: Iran and Iraq are eminently bad neighbors. Saddam Hussein is a secularist dictator who appeals to the Baathist variety of Arab nationalism. Iran, by contrast, upholds Islam as the basis of its ancient polity, but its Shiite leaders detest the Wahabi "heretics" of Al Qaeda and the Taliban. North Korea, on the other hand, is a neo-Stalinist hell on Earth whose minimal external alliances go only as far as Beijing. Thus, the "axis" was another rhetorical device that sought not to describe reality but to blur it.

North Korea, an irrelevant loser in the game of international politics, was included so that its medium-range rockets—developed in case of a conflict on the Korean peninsula, and theoretically capable of reaching the westernmost tip of Alaska, but not California—could justify President Bush's National Missile Defense program. Its inclusion on the most-wanted list is counterproductive; it could prompt North Korea to develop weapons of mass destruction that can be used against the 40,000 American soldiers in South Korea as a means of deterring a threatened attack.

Iraq, by contrast, seems to have been the intended next target for Donald Rumsfeld and Paul Wolfowitz and their think-tank and media cohorts in both parties from the beginning. Within days of September 11, Wolfowitz had argued that, even if Iraq had not been involved in the attacks, it simply did not matter: This was a good time to settle the score with Saddam once and for all. A week later, in an open letter to the President, Bill Kristol and two-dozen neoconservative leading lights argued that, "even if evidence does not link Iraq directly to the attack, any strategy aiming at the eradication of terrorism and its sponsors must include a determined effort to remove Saddam Hussein from power"—regardless of whether it is in the interest of the United States to do so. The war-on-terror blanket has enabled them to impose their agenda and preclude further debate.

The inclusion of Iran in the "axis" is unexpected and dangerous. Iran supports Hamas and Hezbollah, but those organizations are Israeli and Palestinian—not *American*—problems, unless every armed and dangerous fanatic everywhere is an American problem.

If the logic of the "axis of evil" is applied and Iraq is attacked, America's remaining Arab friends will display extreme *timidity*, even hostility. Should they also fear armed retribution in view of the President's warning? Osama bin Laden's real objective all along may have been to provoke a cataclysmic war that can only benefit those who desire the destruction of the remnants of Western civilization. What if the "timidity" about starting an all-out War of Civilizations spreads to our European allies, who have already expressed amazement at the implications of President Bush's speech? Perhaps they had better watch their step, as well: Mr. Wolfowitz has already warned them that the United States is ready to act outside traditional alliances in its fight against terror and that it would take a "dim view" of anyone who tried to sit on the fence. "Nations cannot afford to act like those neutral nations 60 years ago," he told a 43-nation security conference in Munich on February 2.

The logic of justifying the missile-defense project by pointing to September 11 has never been explained. On that day, death did not come by means of an ICBM, and the real and present threat that remains with us does not include a rogue missile. A $100-billion shield will do nothing to protect American cities from nuclear or biological weapons smuggled across the Rio Grande. It may even render such attacks more likely by forcing any possible aggressor to consider alternatives to a method of delivery that leaves a clear "signature" and which may be countered by the antimissile shield. In practical terms, America's true safety is not to be found in antimissile missiles, but in tightly controlled borders and a well-equipped military capable of defending its territory.

Vice President Dick Cheney has announced that the United States is considering military or other action against "forty to fifty countries" and warned that the new war may last "fifty years or more." Bush advisor Richard Perle explained that there will be "no stages" and that not even a pretense of some international "coalition" is needed:

> This is total war . . . If we just let our vision of the world go forth, and we embrace it entirely, and we don't try to piece together clever diplomacy but just wage a total war, our children will sing great songs about us years from now.

Less than a week after the President's speech, Paul Wolfowitz declared that "The best defense is a good offense . . . Our approach has to aim at prevention and not merely punishment. We are at war."

Bill Clinton invented the "Kosovo genocide" in order to justify the bombing of Serbia and to cajole NATO into giving him the mantle of multilateralist legitimacy. The war against terror eliminates the need for similar constructs in the future. The vision presented by President Bush hinges on the continuing technological and military superiority of the United States, not on its moral authority or political magnetism. This mindset—especially when it comes from a presumably "conservative" Republican team—dims any lingering hope that America is still a republic.

When honey changes pots, according to Chinese folk wisdom, fingers get licked. When hundreds of public billions are about to go into private hands, we should ask "*cui bono*?" The day the New York Stock Exchange reopened after September 11, the few advancers were the giant military contractors Alliant Tech Systems, Northrop Grumman, Raytheon, and the biggest supplier of them all, Lockheed Martin, whose shares jumped by a staggering one third. The Bush administration spent the previous nine months of 2001 promising to "transform" the U.S. military by canceling or cutting back obsolete systems to forge a quicker, more mobile force. But defense budgets for this year and next, supplemented by the President's largesse, have managed to retain each and every major Cold War-inspired weapons program that was in the pipeline when Bush first took office. This includes weapons ill suited to the "war on terror," such as nuclear attack submarines, heavy destroyers, the 70-ton Crusader artillery system, and the F-22 fighter plane (at $200 million each). The defense budget of $343 billion has nothing to do with Osama bin Laden. The increase was sought before the attack, to pay for equipment even the Pentagon did not request, such as Boeing's 100 tanker jets at a cost of $26 billion. This is not a war on terror;

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this is pork for weapons contractors, military bureaucrats, and members of Congress.

The shock of September 11 provided an opportunity for America to rediscover that external security is inseparable from the preservation of her identity and liberty at home. President Bush echoed the neoconservative call for "citizen involvement," which is tantamount to militarization of the populace and its seduction into the imperial enterprise. It is indeed desirable to have informed, responsible, and willing citizens participating in the effort to protect the nation at home and present its best image abroad, but this should be done only in accordance with the true spirit of "citizen-soldiers." President Bush's plea for participation is coupled with further centralization of authority and decisionmaking, which inculcates passivity. He offers "citizen participation" of the kind we witnessed all too often in 20th-century Europe, where not only are the ideological assumptions of the rulers beyond critique or reproach, but any expression of doubt is evidence of bad faith. People are encouraged to "participate," but they are no longer expected to make a meaningful contribution.

The President's "non-negotiable demands of human dignity" mean permanent war for permanent peace. It is light years away from candidate Bush's response in the second televised debate with Al Gore (October 2000), when he warned the Vice President that it is not America's role to patrol the planet and arrange other peoples' lives: "One way for us to end up being viewed as the ugly American is for us to go around the world saying, 'We do it this way, so should you.'"

What does the President understand to be the "real Islam?" He may be disingenuous here, because *Islam as such*, and not some allegedly aberrant form of it, is the chief identifiable threat to America's global security in the coming century and, in the long run, to the survival of our civilization. On the other hand, U.S. foreign policy must avoid creating conditions for *specifically anti-American* Islamic hostility. At the same time, Islam should be denied its foothold inside America, and the omission of a moratorium on immigration is the most regrettable missing link in the President's antiterrorist strategy.

The State of the Union Address shows that the President and his national security team have not grasped the main lesson of the tragedy of September 11: that the threat to the lives of ordinary Americans will continue as long as the United States remains committed to the unrestrained projection of its power everywhere in the world. Instead of realizing that the threat to America exists because of the policy of global hegemony, the administration now seems to be telling us that hegemony will be confirmed as the divinely ordained, morally mandated, open-ended, and self-justifying mission of America for decades to come. If that is so, then the terrorist threat will also be unlimited and permanent.

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Empty Streets

Alfred Nicol

I went out on a holiday
In Berkeley, once, alone.
Most everyone had gone away.
The sidewalks were my own.

And I had nowhere left to go—
I'd put the world behind me.
I hid out in the open so
That nobody would find me.

The sun, even, had other plans
And did not come to shine.
My shadow was another man's.
These shadows all were mine.

And I was happy, in a way,
My world was just this size.
There was no clutter in the grey
For me to organize.

I am alone. I am alone—
Who says this suits me well?
The voice I heard was not my own,
But no one else could tell.

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CHRISTIANITY

Throwing Off the Yoke

by Chilton Williamson, Jr.

As a display of "America Standing Together," "Everybody Pile on Falwell" was even more dramatic a spectacle than "Three Firemen Holding the Flag." Following televised remarks by the founder of the Moral Majority to the effect that the terrorist attacks of September 11 conveyed God's wrath against a nation that has been commandeered by heretics and Satanists promoting abortion, homosexuality, pornography, adultery, fornication, and other godless practices warned against in the Good Book, the establishment right, from President Bush on down to William F. Buckley, Jr., joined the shocked, affronted left in denouncing Falwell's vulgar, divisive bigotry. (The prophet Jeremiah was thrown down a well for less.)

Granted—as pious critics pointed out—no man should presume to speak for God—unless, of course, he's been divinely appointed to do so (a possibility left widely unconsidered in the case of the Reverend Falwell). Granted also, Jerry Falwell's career has smacked more of the role of God's publicist than of His prophet. Still, it does not take a prophet to recall God's historical interventions against a people He wishes to chastise—just a Bible reader. And, if the notion of direct intervention in human affairs on the part of the Almighty offends your modernized theological sensibilities, there's always indirect intervention to fall back on. (The flouting of God's law produces a disruption in the divine economy that automatically results in bad things happening to nations and societies, good and bad people alike.) Falwell's problem is that, while America—adept nowadays at ignoring the prophet and burying his message—is less and less alarmed by prophecy, it regards publicity (the sword by which Americans live or die) on behalf of anything it disapproves as the deserving target of a crushing counter-publicity campaign.

What Jerry Falwell was saying in his crude, insensitive, Old American way is that America's principal enemy is what the country has allowed itself to become—not foreign regimes, armies, potentates, and terrorists who, actually or potentially, threaten the increasingly hollow shell of a once-great nation and people. And America has become its own worst enemy because its "leaders" have declared themselves to be God's enemy—the enemy of the Christian Faith. It's hard to imagine a professing Christian, whether born-again Protestant (like George W. Bush) or Roman Catholic (like others who deplore Falwell), disagreeing with this conclusion, but, it seems, plenty do.

When you carefully examine all that has been under attack by the left in America for the past hundred years or so and compare it with what the right (loosely speaking) has surrendered to it, you can see that the common thread linking these things is their connection with, or affinity for, Christianity. The deconstruction of America (and the West as a whole) places Western culture, rationalism, the rule of constitutional law, free markets, the white race (males in particular), sexual morality, the family, "patriarchy," intermediate social institutions, moral restraint, and religious authority high on its agenda for destruction. But these are, in one sense, secondary targets, selected either for their (often unique) compatibility with Christianity or else as direct products or constructs of it. The story is reminiscent of a novel by Agatha Christie in which the murderer kills off a series of victims, chosen alphabetically by name but otherwise at random, in order to conceal the one murder for which he really had a motive.

The left attacks Christianity and its satellite institutions because they represent universal reality, which leftists despise, deny, and work to overthrow, in order to supplant it with a reality of their own making. But how has the left enjoyed so long and successful a run in this country and in Europe, where the majority of the people are not leftist themselves? How has the majority succumbed to the point where leftism is effectively the dominant culture of the West and of America? The answer is not primarily the lure of socialism, the nanny state or Big Brother, relativism, positivism, individualism, mass democracy, racial and sexual equality, one-worldism, and other leading idols of progressivism. It is the casual, almost careless revolt against Christianity by nations tempted by their governments into sloth, indiscipline, indifference, and finally unbelief in the Faith that, for 2,000 years, gave them their identity and their will to exist, as well as their historical success.

"My yoke is easy, and my burden light." Yes, they are, once you have learned to adjust the yoke and balance the burden comfortably; learning to do that, however, is hard—harder than a great many Americans whose ancestors carried the weight of the Cross without complaint are willing to accept. G.K. Chesterton observed that people who have ceased to believe in Christianity are in danger of believing anything, rather than nothing. In the same way, people who once knew how to bear Christ's yoke with fortitude tend to discover, after it has become too burdensome for them to carry, that other things also seem impossible for them to bear—including the pain of being a man, or, at least, a certain kind of man. One reason why the United States is swamped by poverty-stricken Third World immigrants is that these nomads have imagined—through exposure in their native countries to American television, movies, music, consumer goods, and the amazing career of Bill Clinton—that America is the place to go if you wish to escape, once and for all, the human condition.

Since Al Qaeda's attack last September, the United States has been awash with admiration and sympathy, not hatred and disgust, for Islam and Muslims. A similarly perverse—and totally unexpectable—reaction occurred in the early 1980's when the discovery of the AIDS epidemic produced enthusiastic acceptance of homosexuals and a wild admiration for the "gay lifestyle," rather than fear and loathing of them. In the wake of the American elite's successful barnstorming campaign against "hatred," "xenophobia," "profiling," and "bigotry," post-September 11 opinion polls reveal a greater sympathy for, and interest in, Islam. It is entirely possible, as a result, that thousands of "Christian" Americans may be-

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come converts to what President Bush calls a "religion of peace," as thousands converted to Buddhism or Taoism during the Vietnam War. Part of the allure that exotic religions hold for nominal American Christians is the perception that they impose no personal restraints, yokes, or burdens (e.g., chastity, monogamy, charity, orthodoxy) on their adherents—which, in the case of Buddhism, seems largely true. (A Chinese Buddhist of my acquaintance insists I can be a practicing Buddhist as well as a conscientious Catholic; my priest thinks otherwise.) Islam is notoriously strict, but it probably will not dawn on future American converts that, with respect to stated prohibitions (booze, ankles, razors, adultery), the mullahs mean what they say—until they have their heads lopped off by a hairy swordsman in the Safeway parking lot behind the local mosque.

An extreme example of primary anti-Christianity underlying secondary racial hatred is the revolt by an increasing number of American blacks against what they regard as the "white man's religion." The popularity of Kwanza, an aggressive emphasis on the erotic aspects of black Gospel worship that distinguish it from white religious services, and the cult of "Dr." Martin Luther King, Jr. (plagiarist, serial adulterer and philanderer, and communist fellow traveler) suggest that a significant number of blacks in this country are ready to pawn the pearl of great price they snatched from chattel slavery. Like so many of their white counterparts, they find the Christian faith an unwelcome and annoying distraction from sex, crack, drink, basketball, the mall—and the propitiation of Our Father Who Art in Washington, D.C.

The left, with its deadly instinct for the vital spot, identified from the start what was easiest for potential adherents to hate and resisters to practice: biblical Christianity. What Pat Buchanan calls the "death of the West" has always been intended, fundamentally, as the eradication of the Faith. Another writer, Prof. Philip Jenkins of Pennsylvania State University, predicts in a forthcoming book (*The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity*, Oxford University Press) that the future of the Christian religion will have its locus elsewhere than historic Christendom. But that, of course, is another story.

Chilton Williamson, Jr., is the senior editor for books at Chronicles.

MULTICULTURALISM

The Lessons of Leicester

by Philip Jenkins

Until recently, the English city of Leicester was definitely not the sort of place that attracted tourists. It was a generic English town, neither a beneficiary of a high-tech boom, nor (especially) a victim of industrial collapse. Its sense of Midland stolidity was reflected in the city's motto: *Semper Eadem*, always the same.

Over the past few years, though, Leicester has become a model city of sorts, as the best argument Europe can offer for racial integration and multiculturalism. This claim makes Leicester the obvious center for conferences and training programs; each new wave of urban rioting elsewhere in the United Kingdom brings hundreds of cops and bureaucrats to Leicester to see how things are done right. Leicester is a melting pot in miniature, in which all races and religions work happily together. And that image lasted until early this year, when stories from Leicester started showing that things had gone horribly wrong on the multicultural front. Leicester may indeed be a model for some new kind of social pattern, in the United States as well as Europe—but not one the city fathers are going to be too proud of.

In the 1970's, Leicester became a principal destination for South Asian migrants, particularly those kicked out of Uganda by the tyrannical Idi Amin. To much local anger, an Asian community became rooted here and grew rapidly, so that by 2010, Leicester should become the first British city in which whites form a minority. (That condition will apply throughout England by the end of the present century). Still, resentment cooled when the great majority of the Asians turned out to be hard-working, family-oriented people who consistently acted like the best stereotypes of white Middle England. Asian families became popular when they took over corner stores and newspaper shops that would otherwise have died and thereby kept alive a great many shopping streets and commercial centers. By the 1990's, significant anti-Asian racism was all but dead, save the efforts of a few hardcore militants who could be dismissed as outside troublemakers. Leicester has largely escaped the urban rioting of Britain's recent long, hot summers.

Race-relations activists began citing the city as a kind of utopia that proved whites should not fear immigration or integration. American readers encountered this argument in a lyrical article by Warren Hoge, published in the *New York Times* under the evocative title "British City Defines Diversity and Tolerance" (February 8, 2001). Each paragraph lauded Leicester's triumph over prejudice—Asian students having no acquaintance with racism or harassment, assertions that "Leicester defines itself as the tolerant, multicultural city of Europe." As Hoge writes,

> A typical sight in Leicester are Gothic churches with stone crosses or Victorian-period red brick mills and factory buildings, now converted to Muslim community halls, Sikh and Hindu temples or small business centers.

The Leicester model was such an evident triumph that Hoge recommended it for everyone. He concluded by reporting an Asian father who quoted his teenaged daughters: "Now when we go to parts of England that are white bastions, they're saddened at the absence of anyone from the Indian subcontinent." And they all lived happily ever after.

Obviously, this tale contains a "but," and this past January, multicultural Leicester was forced to deal with a qualification of some magnitude. In the space of three days, British police arrested 17 Leicester Muslims, charging them with being activists for the global terrorist network Al Qaeda. Nor were these small fry, enthusiastic fans enchanted by those incredible posters we see on television news of Osama bin Laden sporting on his shoulder images of Bert from *Sesame Street*. For some years, Leicester's Islamic community has been home to a major group of Al Qaeda recruiters and organizers. Many were Algerian, and they formed an integral part of the network that organized the September 11 attacks. Leicester was also a center for the fanatical Islamist group *Takfir-wal-Hijra* ("Anathema and Exile"). One of the major prizes arrested in the Leicester raids was Alger-

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ian Kamel Daoudi, allegedly a computer specialist for this group. Another detainee was reputedly an Al Qaeda financier.

For these activists, Leicester was one familiar stop on a route that included London, Birmingham, Madrid, Paris, and a dozen other centers in Europe and the Middle East. The key organizer was Algerian Djamel Beghal, who, according to the *Independent*,

> apparently cultivated young Muslims through a local mosque [in Leicester]. He also quietly built up the network of supporters among foreign émigrés, who used the local Indian and Pakistani communities as cover.

Specifically, Beghal is accused of recruiting both British "shoe-bomber" Richard Reid and would-be September 11 hijacker Zacarias Mousaaoui. What exactly was going on in those "Muslim community halls" touted by Hoge?

Whether Leicester still has fighters preparing for attacks has not been proved, but the town clearly has been a European center for terrorist infrastructure, financial dealings, supplies, and concealing fugitives. Just how broad local support runs is not clear. Last November, however, during the U.S. air attacks on Afghanistan, Muslims represented the great majority of some 2,500 protesters who joined an antiwar demonstration in Leicester. Most were from the Highfields section, which was also the scene of the January police raids.

Public reaction to these events in England has been startling. While it is not surprising that police would be sounding the alarm, some of the loudest concerns have been expressed by the traditional organs of left-liberalism. The London *Observer*, for instance, published a detailed investigation under the title "How Bin Laden Network Spread Its Tentacles" (January 20), reporting that "a burgeoning number of Islamist terror suspects [are] detained as the UK wakes up to its enemy within." The article continues,

> The lesson now appears clear. There are *al-Qaeda* links from Brighton to Bolton, from Scotland to Slough. The idea that Islamic extremism was limited to a few loud-mouthed polemicists in north and west London has been shown to be nothing more than a comforting fallacy.

Britain was apparently swarming with "Binmen," followers of bin Laden. (The term is a groaning pun on "bin-men," the British term for garbage collectors.) The *Independent* headlined "How *al-Qa'ida's* web of terror led from Afghanistan to Leicester."

The *Observer* was damning with regard to police and intelligence neglect of these very dangerous groups, a neglect that was largely political. Police and governments wanted to avoid inflaming Muslim organizations and being accused of civil-rights violations. Nobody wanted to face the wrath of outraged Muslim "community leaders" protesting arrests. (How much easier it is to let sleeping cells lie.) The *Observer* concluded, however, that following recent revelations, "Politicians and policemen alike are aware of the risks—but say the stakes are too high to hold back." Reading this sort of thing in the *Observer* is almost like finding the *Nation* or the *National Catholic Reporter* urging the FBI to detain all Arab-Americans forthwith and to ignore any whining from ACLU pinkos.

In the aftermath of the police raids, older news articles make distinctly odd reading: "British City Defines Diversity and Tolerance," indeed. One reason integration has worked so relatively well in Leicester is that the great bulk of the nonwhite communities belong to religious groups that have no particular grievance against British or Western culture. They want nothing more than to be left alone to live in peace and good order and to make as good a living as they can. This is clearly true of Hindus and Sikhs, both of whom have potent historical and political grounds for opposing Muslim extremism. The reason Sikhs survive at all is that their ancestors simply became too tough for their Muslim neighbors to annihilate.

Muslim immigrants in Europe also largely seem to be concerned with living their lives in peace, but Muslims differ substantially from other traditions in that modern Islam has a radical wing that is utterly opposed to every aspect of Western culture and prepared to fight savagely to achieve its goals. The point may sound obvious, but it is one we neglect at our peril. As a community, Muslims in the West are simply different from other ethnic and religious groups, since they contain deeply sinister and well-organized elements who have to be sought out and destroyed. The worst mistake Westerners could make would be to ignore radical Islamic activism through oversensitivity to the threat of giving offense on the grounds of race or religion. Pretending that everyone is living happily side by side in merry multicultural Britain is fine as public relations, so long as preserving that image does not force the authorities to hold off on vital investigations into groups that threaten the lives of thousands of people.

Of course, every word here applies with equal force to the United States, where it is the grossest heresy to suggest that any single ethnic or religious group might pose a problem *as a group*. Remember the first World Trade Center attack in 1993, when Bill Clinton dismissed the bombing as the work of "a few people who did something stupid"? He was trying to prevent vigilante attacks against Muslims on American soil, and, to that extent, his aim was worthy. In practice, though, pretending that organized extremism did not exist meant that federal authorities were prohibited from investigating leads that would have led them beyond the narrow band of perpetrators. Such inquiries would probably have exposed Islamist networks operating within the United States. If you don't look, you won't find. To use the British phrase, Clinton's statement was a "comforting fallacy."

Some people have suggested that the English language needs a word to indicate the opposite of "paranoia" and propose coining the term *pronoia*, the delusional belief that people are *not* out to get you. The lesson of Leicester is that we have been suffering from a very bad case of collective pronoia.

Philip Jenkins is the author, most recently, of The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity *(Oxford University Press).*

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Knowing What We Don't Know

by Robert D. Hickson

Before publishing his essay "The Lonely Superpower" (*Foreign Affairs*, 1999), Samuel Huntington had spoken more candidly in an address to the American Enterprise Institute in May 1998. On that occasion, he had identified himself as an old-fashioned Burkean conservative.

Huntington's central thesis is that "global politics has now moved from a brief unipolar moment at the end of the Cold War, into one of perhaps more UNI-MULTIPOLAR decades on its way towards a multi-polar twenty-first century." Such a "multipolarity" will be better for the United States and certainly more stable for us than our current heap of tensions:

> Such a world, however, will lack the tension and conflicts between the superpower and the major regional powers that is the defining characteristic of a uni-multipolar world. And for that reason the United States could find life as a major power in a multipolar world less demanding, less contentious, and more rewarding than it has been as the world's only superpower.

Huntington openly criticized Richard Haass (now director of policy in the U.S. State Department) for arguing that "the United States should act as a global sheriff, rounding up posses of other states to deal with major international issues as they arise." In fact, says Huntington, what we are seeing is that the United States can only gather, at best, "an Anglo-Saxon posse, not a global one," made up of "our closest cultural cousins: Britain, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand."

Professor Huntington warned against the rhetoric of American superiority espoused by former secretary of state Madeleine Albright, pointing to the results of an international conference held at Harvard in 1997:

> As reported by conference participants, the leaders of countries with at least two-thirds or more of the world's people—Chinese, Russian, Indians, Arabs, Muslims, Africans—see the United States as the *single greatest external* threat to their societies. They do *not* see America as a military threat; they *do* see it as *a threat to their integrity*, autonomy, prosperity, *and freedom of action* to pursue their interests as they see fit. They see the United States as intrusive, interventionist, exploitative, unilateralist, hegemonic, hypocritical, *applying double standards*, engaging in "financial imperialism" and "intellectual colonialism," *and with a foreign policy driven overwhelmingly by domestic politics, particularly the Israeli lobby*.

(In his *Foreign Affairs* article, Huntington quotes the passage almost verbatim, but notably omits "particularly the Israeli lobby.")

The following February, Huntington addressed a conference held at Colorado College. Near the end of his speech, he narrowed his focus from the West in general to the United States and the American identity, asking, "Are we a country with one culture or many? *If we are a country of many cultures, what then is the basis of national unity?*"

In the aftermath of September 11, 2001, Professor Huntington's question takes on even more import. What is the long-range basis of our multicultural national unity—and will it hold against those who have deeper convictions about truth? Huntington's answer is as anemic as it is unconvincing:

> Historically, America has had a *single predominant culture*, the *product* of the original British settlers, and successive waves of immigrants have assimilated into *that culture*, while also modifying it. Its key elements have been a European heritage, the English language, the Christian religion, and Protestant values. Ethnic, racial, regional, and other subcultures existed within *this overarching dominant culture* in which virtually all groups shared.

But if this is what truly constitutes our *substance*, then the jig is up. Those nourishing and fortifying "Protestant values" are as nutritious as a microwave dinner, and our generic "European" heritage is little more than a residue of vanished ethnic traditions. But even this bland core (which never amounted to much) is

> under challenge by devotees of multiculturalism, by some minority group and immigrant group leaders, and by political figures including the President and Vice President. President Clinton has explicitly stated that we need a "great revolution . . . to prove that we literally can live without having a dominant European culture." Vice President Gore has, despite his Harvard education, mistranslated our national motto, *e pluribus unum*, to mean "from one, many."

Huntington feebly concludes that Americans will either recover their historic culture or see their country

> torn apart and fractured by those determined to undermine and destroy *the European, Christian, Protestant, English culture* that has been *the source of our national wealth and power* and the great principles of liberty, equality, and democracy that have made this country *the hope* for people *all over the world*.

He again expresses his conviction that this nation, which is more and more pervasively perceived as a "rogue superpower," is still a Protestant Christian nation, though all the evidence suggests that we are living in a "post-Christian society."

Professor Huntington is not stupid, but he does not seem to have a clue as to what a Christian civilization would look like. He is blinded by the Enlightenment. Aldous Huxley was less deceived. In his 1937 book *Ends and Means*, Huxley faced himself and the Enlightenment West. He understood the force of destructive "liberations," rooted in the Enlightenment's presumptuous premises about man.

"The liberation we desired," he confessed, was finally "a liberation from a certain system of morality" (Christian morality), and "we objected to the morality because it interfered with our sexual freedom." Indeed, he adds, the "more serious writers associated political with sexual prejudice and recommended philosophy (in practice, *the philosophy of meaninglessness*) as a *preparation* for social reform and *revolution*." Revolutionary nihilism masked itself as "libera-

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tion"—both liberation from the moral law and liberation from any final meaning in the universe.

As Huxley saw the progress of materialism, nihilism, and "the popularization of meaninglessness," especially after the demoralizing savagery of World War I and its effects on civilization, he became more troubled. He admits that "It was the manifestly poisonous nature of the *fruits* that forced me to consider the philosophical tree on which they grew."

In light of Professor Huntington's thesis about the coming "clash of civilizations" and the contentious dialectic of their deeper sacred cultures. Huxley's insights have a terrifying ring:

> The general acceptance of *a doctrine that denies meaning and value to the world as a whole, while assigning them in a supreme degree to certain arbitrarily selected parts of the totality can have only evil and disastrous results.*

Noting again the seductive power of intellectual fashion, Huxley writes:

> Indeed it was fashionable during the Enlightenment of the middle nineteenth century to speak of the need for *supplying the masses with "VITAL LIES" calculated* to make those who accepted them not only happy, but well behaved. *The truth—which was that there was NO MEANING OR VALUE in the world*—should be *revealed only to the few who were strong enough to stomach it.*

The American "masses" today are also treated to "vital lies" and sophisticated forms of deception. At a U.S. Army War College Seminar, Prof. Andrew Bacevich of Boston University, a retired Army colonel, argued that a hegemonic orientation of the United States would "entirely re-cast the ethos of the American Soldier." Bacevich posed two questions to his audience: "What is America's global purpose?"; and "What is the military's role in support of that purpose?"

Responding to the conference's title, "Transforming Defense in an Era of Peace and Prosperity," Bacevich further argued that "the whole debate about 'transformation'" was "really *an unacknowledged debate over purpose*" that was "*fundamentally dishonest.*" He added that "truisms are endlessly cited" by our leadership, but "they dodge the bigger issue of *purpose*"—and, thus, the matter of *meaning* and of *truth*.

"America's purpose," he argued, is "global hegemony," which is a long way from "providing for the common defense," in the words of the U.S. Constitution. Under this new orientation, the American soldier's "true role is neo-imperial," which is also why General Zinney (now a retired officer on loan to the U.S. State Department) said in late October 2000—*while still on active duty*—that the commanders-in-chief of the major Unified Commands have become "the new Proconsuls." But, "those who serve the Proconsul, and follow the Proconsul, are Praetorians," retorted Bacevich.

Many in the U.S. military do not yet recognize the fuller implications of this new orientation, but Bacevich expects that the general citizenry itself will soon be in for a real shock: "I gotta tell you, if they get wind of this, look out!" Thus, our unacknowledged "neo-imperial *purpose*" is a form of deception and sophistry. Bacevich believes that this will backfire on us, producing a "blowback" not only from abroad but from the homefront, further weakening us.

Like Huntington, Bacevich does not fully grasp the nature of America's crisis. James Kurth, one of Huntington's former students, sees the problem more clearly. Kurth is a Protestant, rooted in the original Protestant Reformation but not in what he calls the "six stages of the Protestant Declension," which have produced the current "Protestant Deformation." Implicitly critiquing Huntington's conception of America's "core culture" and of our increasingly desacralized (and apparently "atomizing") "American Creed," Professor Kurth addressed the Philadelphia Society in 2001 on "The Protestant Deformation and American Foreign Policy":

> . . . American foreign policy has been, and continues to be, shaped by the Protestant origins of the United States. But the Protestantism that has shaped American foreign policy over two centuries has not been the original religion but a series of successive departures from it down the scale of what might be called the Protestant declension. . . . With the United States left as the sole superpower, this Protestant Deformation is at its greatest, even global influence. Because it is such a peculiar religion, and indeed is correctly seen as a fundamental and fatal threat by all the other religions, its pervasive sway is generating intense resistance and international conflict.

After admitting that "all Protestant churches reject hierarchy and community as the means to salvation," Professor Kurth traces the "six stages" of attenuation and its soft apostasy from this original Protestant religion in America. He quotes various religious leaders whose language has become more abstract and vague and who only occasionally make "reference to the Supreme Being or Divine Providence and rarely to Jesus Christ or the Holy Spirit." Whether they are even Trinitarian in belief any longer is a matter of doubt. The two essential doctrines of the historic Christian Faith—the Trinity and the Incarnation—were spoken about in less and less specific ways, further preparing the way for what Professor Kurth calls "the unitarian transformation," which is the fourth of "the Six Stages of the Protestant Declension."

Of the fifth stage ("the American Creed"), he writes:

> The American Creed definitely did not include as elements hierarchy, community, tradition, and custom. Although the American Creed was not in itself Protestant, it was clearly the product of Protestant Culture and was a sort of secularized version of Protestantism.

Professor Kurth does not go much further to explain the content and composition of this "sort of secularized version of Protestantism." He does say, however, that our tradition of "idealism" in foreign policy—as in the case of Woodrow Wilson—is "really secularized Protestantism." And to Woodrow Wilson himself and "to the Protestant mind of Americans" in general, "Catholicism and Confucianism"—with all their hierarchy and community and tradition—"seemed obviously retrograde and irrational."

Kurth incisively summarizes U.S. foreign policy (especially since the end of World War II) and calls it "realism toward the strong and idealism toward the weak." This short formulation reveals an unflattering aspect of our growing at home hypocrisy and double standard abroad.

Kurth writes of our movement from "possessive individualism," analyzed in

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Max Weber's *Protestantism and the Spirit of Capitalism*, to what Kurth calls "expressive individualism," since we have now apparently moved to a "post-industrial economy" and thus "from a producer to a consumer mentality." Our "core culture" is now displayed in "the new post-industrial, consumer, post-modern, expressive-individualist American." We must further acknowledge, he says, that "the ideology of expressive individualism" is "a total philosophy"—indeed, "a sort of totalitarianism of the self." Like the other political variant of totalitarianism—"totalitarianism of the State"—it is "relentless in breaking down intermediate bodies and mediating institutions" that "stand between the [isolated] individual and the highest powers or the widest forces." Kurth makes an important link with the phenomenon of neoliberal capitalism and "economic globalism" by saying that, "with the totalitarianism of the self, the widest forces are the agencies of the global economy." Unfortunately, Kurth does not specify the nature of this financial and economic "overworld" nor what and who the specific "agencies" and instrumentalities actually are.

Refusing to let his audience off the hook, however, Professor Kurth tells us that "Expressive individualism . . . represents the logical conclusion and the ultimate extreme of the secularization of the Protestant religion." Furthermore, this "expressive individualism" logically and psychologically results in "the *imperial* self," since "the Protestant Deformation is a Protestantism without God," which constitutes a grave impiety and "the *idolatry* of the self." Taken together, this means *an imperial idolatry* that is now inflicted abroad and which is likely to provoke strong reactions from abroad, especially from other, more communal religious cultures—such as Islam. Such an intense strategic reaction may even turn into "a sort of counter-Deformation to the Protestant Deformation."

In addition to Huntington's "clash of civilizations," according to Kurth, we may see a new and very destructive *dialectic of dissolution* in "these wars of *secularized* religion," which will "replace the worship of God with the expression of self" and "the gratification of oneself," even when it is desperately self-destructive. It has been wisely said that a suicide dies in order to die, whereas a true martyr dies in order to live.

We have likely come to the point where we shall have to confront this real distinction much more often. The struggle between nihilism and sacred faith may be even deeper than Aldous Huxley so lucidly discerned. We may also confront other seductive forms of Huxley's "*theologies . . . of revolutionary idolatry*," which, perhaps, will leave Samuel Huntington even more perplexed, if not at last awakened to the ultimate reality—which was not made by man.

We must honestly strive to know—and to acknowledge—what we do not know. To know what we do not know is a form of knowledge (*ignorantia docta*) in itself, one which we shall need in dealing with foreign cultures, especially with foreign *sacred* cultures, like the Muhammadan civilization, which increasingly despises our own deeply materialistic and desacralized, if not apostate, civilization. Are we prepared for this?

Robert D. Hickson is a professor of strategic and cultural studies and national security at the Joint Special Operations University, U.S. Special Operations Command.

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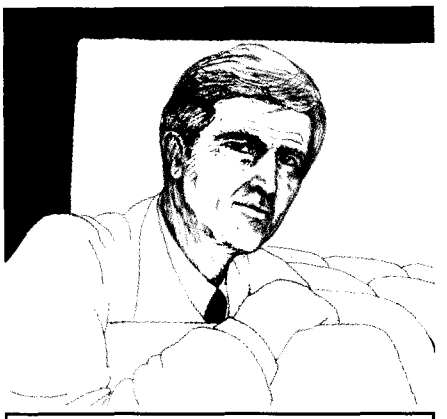
by George McCartney

Love, War, and Other Misunderstandings



In the Bedroom

Produced by Good Machine and GreeneStreet Films Inc.
Directed by Todd Field
Screenplay by Robert Festinger from a story by Andre Dubus
Released by Good Machine and Miramax Films

Blackhawk Down

Produced by Columbia Pictures Corporation and Jerry Bruckheimer Films
Directed by Ridley Scott
Screenplay by Ken Nolan and Mark Bowden
Released by Columbia Pictures and Sony Pictures Entertainment

In the Bedroom is first-time director Todd Field's adaptation of Andre Dubus' short story "Killings." Although the film has received almost universal praise, I found it oddly purblind to Dubus' intentions and, consequently, unconvincing.

Dubus wrote his narrative from the point of view of Matt Fowler, a village storekeeper, whose life unravels when his 21-year-old son is murdered. Without overtly moralizing, the story considers the lives of ordinary people who slip into disaster by doing and permitting what comes all too naturally.

While home for the summer between college and graduate school, Matt's son Frank falls in with Natalie, a woman four years his elder. Separated from her abusive husband, she has two sons to rear and finds in Frank a man patient and gentle enough both to romance and to comfort her. He even helps her take care of the tykes. The estranged husband, a layabout bully given to drink and brawling, shows up one evening and, in a jealous rage, shoots Frank in front of Natalie and her children. Following the slaying, he is arrested and indicted. A few days later, however, he is released on bail. Furthermore, to the dismay of the grieving parents, the facts of the case are such that he will be charged with manslaughter rather than murder and, perhaps, spend no more than five years in prison. On top of their loss, this information torments the parents unendurably. Finally, Matt can stand it no longer and decides that he will try to set things right himself, putting in motion a surprisingly cold-blooded denouement. It is Greek tragedy played out in lower-middle-class suburbia.

While covering the same ground, Field has made changes that seriously compromise Dubus' story. In the film, Matt (Tom Wilkinson) is transformed into a village physician. This gives him a position and influence that do not comport with the decisions he makes. Curiouser still, the age difference between the lovers has widened. As played by Nick Stahl, Frank is merely a month out of high school. The young wife becomes 37-year-old Marisa Tomei. This gives their romance an entirely different cast. In the original text, Matt is half amused by his son's dalliance, assuming it will end when the boy departs for graduate school. While his reaction might lack the moral probity expected from a 54-year-old father, it is not implausible. In the film, however, his attitude seems willfully stupid. There's nothing amusing about the lovers' nearly 19-year age difference. Nevertheless, Matt tolerates their May-December relationship, apparently unable to work up any suspicions about Natalie's motives. Coming home unexpectedly early one afternoon, he finds his boy and his lover guiltily creeping downstairs from his bedroom. Instead of telling them what's what, he seeks to smooth over their embarrassment by inviting them to have lunch with him. Moreover, he welcomes Natalie to a family barbecue with neighbors in attendance. Blithely untroubled about giving scandal, he even feels free to appraise her shapely posterior as he mans the outdoor grill. When she detects his ogling, she flounces haughtily away with a display of a modesty her actions have long since forfeited.

The behavior on parade throughout the first third of the film resembles that of the moral imbeciles who show up on the television circuses run by Jerry Springer. Imagine finding your teenage son in sexual thrall to a woman approaching 40. Would you hold your peace? Since Wilkinson plays Matt as an eminently reasonable man with high hopes for his son's advancement in life, one wonders why he does not send the strumpet packing and ground the kid for hormonal waywardness. The only answer the film gives is spoken by Matt's wife (Sissy Spacek). In a fit of recrimination following the murder, she accuses Matt of abetting the relationship and, worse, enjoying it vicariously. "You wanted what he had—her," she hisses. This is meant to be a searing moment of fatal revelation akin to the awful discoveries in *Phaedra* and *Oedipus Rex*, but I was not convinced. Wilkinson's Matt seems far too self-aware and rational to be long misled by secondhand lust. He is a careful man whose one abiding sin is his middle-class prudence. Early in his marriage, he resisted his wife's desire to have more children, arguing they would retard advancement his career. There's no headlong hubris in this fellow. He is certifiably not a tragic hero. Consequently, we can only judge his tolerance of his son's behavior as a sign of moral weakness. Yet Wilkinson does not play the character this way. Instead, he makes him a sturdy, decent man who finds within himself the resources necessary to face an extraordinary catastrophe. While Wilkinson does this masterfully in the second half of the film, the first half so seriously undercuts his character's credibility that I found myself unable to feel what is supposed to be the pathos of his situation. Instead of heroically tragic, he merely seems foolishly derelict. Polonius rather than Lear, he is a middle-aged man who has be-

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come so complacently civilized that he has forgotten how dangerous unruly passions can be. Had Wilkinson played it this way, the film might have worked.

Ridley Scott's filming of Mark Bowden's *Blackhawk Down* is another misconceived adaptation. Bowden, a reporter for the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, interviewed numerous combatants, both American and Somali, to construct a minute-by-minute account of the Task Force Ranger battle in Mogadishu on October 3, 1993, in which we lost 18 men. He also took pains to give some idea of the political dynamics that led to this event. The film, on the other hand, contents itself with a nonstop, in-your-face depiction of the "fog of war," witnessed at ground level. Scott's staging is utterly convincing and undeniably powerful; but during two-and-half hours of shooting, shelling, grenading, bleeding, and screaming, I longed to hit the pause button now and again. If only the action would stop, the cameras pull back, and someone—anyone—provide some perspective on the carnage we were watching. But perspective is precisely what Scott has decided to erase. Using extreme close-ups, jouncing handheld cameras, and whiplash montage, he has made it nearly impossible to distinguish one actor from another in their standard-issue uniforms. The Somalis are even less distinguishable. They come at us as a mass of gun-toting rioters who unaccountably want to shoot down our helicopters and kill our boys. Those in the audience—and I suspect their number is legion—who do not know much about our misguided humanitarian and nation-building efforts in Somalia will be at a loss to make sense of what they are seeing. True, there are a few explanatory notes on the screen as the film begins, but they hardly suffice. We are told of warlord and clan leader Mohamed Farrah Aidid, who had been grabbing U.N. food shipments meant for starving Somalis. By some accounts, he deliberately engineered a famine that killed more than 300,000. We are given a scene in which Sam Shepherd, playing Maj. Gen. William F. Garrison, the Task Force commander, confronts Osman Atto, a captured Somali arms dealer, with this statistic. This is "not war; it's genocide," he charges. Atto, who was also Aidid's banker, is not impressed. He points out with a shrug that famine is a longstanding weapon of war.

This film is most remarkable for what it does not say. Somalia is not a nation but, at best, a loose coalition of fractious clans living on land that was once under British, and then Italian, control. As the leader of the Habr Gidr clan, Aidid had led the campaign that ousted the Soviet-supported dictator Mohamed Siad Barre in 1991 and expected he would be made top dog for his pains rather than be asked to share power with other tribes weaker but no less ruthless than his. Nor are we told that Aidid's 14 children have lived in America and that one, Hussein Aidid, became a Marine reservist in California and has since returned to his homeland, where he is now offering to help America win her war against the Al Qaeda terrorists.

For most of the film, the Somali point of view is simply ignored. Bowden, on the other hand, goes out of his way to help us understand these people. It is, after all, of some interest that thousands of them—men, women, and children—risked their lives to repel our assault on Aidid's headquarters. They were going up against helicopters equipped with machine guns and missiles and ground troops armed with the most sophisticated handheld weaponry the world has ever known. The resulting body count speaks for itself: We lost 18; they lost between 500 and 1,000. When a people are willing to suffer such losses, something more than obstinate savagery motivates them. While many Somalis had, at first, welcomed U.N. and U.S. aid, they turned hostile when we allowed Aidid's ruthless machinations to draw us into their civil war. There had been six gunship raids before the one on October 3, one of which was especially bloody. Trying to capture Aidid, our forces had acted on faulty intelligence and attacked a Habr Gidr meeting at which he was not present. The meeting had been called by the clan's elders and intellectuals who disagreed with Aidid's rabid policies and wanted to work with U.N. and American forces to restore peace. We managed to kill 50 to 70 of these people, including some women and children. After this, we increased our helicopter surveillance. Bowden reports that the terrific updraft of the Blackhawks often tore the tin roofs off the Somalis' homes, plucked their women's loose robes from their backs, and, far worse, ripped infants from their arms.

Our mission may have begun with humanitarian goals, but the Somalis, with the prompting of Aidid's vicious radio propaganda, soon came to see us as emissaries of high-tech evil. We can protest all we want about their barbarity, their insane fratricidal clan warfare, their leaders' willingness to starve women and children to get their way. What good does it do? This is their world, and, horrible as it is, we should remember ours has not been especially enlightened over the centuries either, particularly during the 20th, when over 50 million were sacrificed to brutal ideologies and the wars they provoked.

Blackhawk Down tries to put as brave a face as possible on our role in Somalia and to make us feel that we showed our stuff on Mogadishu's dusty streets. A Delta Force operative briefly explains his warrior philosophy. "People ask me, why do you do it; you some kind of war junkie? They don't understand it's about the man next to you, that's all it is." It takes nothing away from the nobility of this sentiment to say that this is not enough. While we can be grateful that there are such men in the world, heroes ready to hurl themselves into danger to defend us, their code offers no guide, and certainly no justification, for our conduct on the world stage.

The scene that I will remember most from this film is the one in which Somali boys on hills and rooftops outside Mogadishu hold up their right hands toward our advancing helicopters. At first, I thought the kids were pointing guns at them. But, no, they were aiming cell phones to catch the sound of the rotor blades from their different locations and transmit it to their fathers and older brothers in the city. They created an early-warning network complete with a homemade global-positioning system. We should keep this image in mind the next time we are tempted to conduct a little nation-building among people we do not understand.

Scott's film does have one virtue: It is gaining wider readership for Bowden's fair-minded account of how brave American soldiers sacrificed themselves for ill-considered policies hatched in Washington. C

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by Chilton Williamson, Jr.

The Mysterious Mountain

The wind that had risen directly after sunset blew hard down-canyon, filling the rocky bowl where camp was fixed with a sound like rushing water, scouring the open fire pit, and sending red sparks in sheets among the dry cacti and bushes. Between gusts, the coals in the bottom of the pit burned dark red and purple, then brightened to orange and yellow when the wind hit them. Piled nearly a foot deep, they resembled the ruins of a destroyed city, burning with the vengeful heat of a crematorium. Overhead, the stars remained obscured by the brilliant firelight until you stepped away from the campfire among the thornbush and *cholla*, while the night sky waited for a new moon.

"Is it possible humans actually *are* as malleable as the social engineers believe?" I asked, returning to the fire after briefly inspecting, the Pleiades through binoculars. "I thought about it all the way down the Front Range yesterday. O for an atom bomb!—as Evelyn Waugh said. What kind of being other than a totally adaptable one could live in Denver and call it home? Modern cities aren't just not communities anymore, they aren't even cities—simply conglomerations of realty machines designed for the purpose of processing populations and money. Not even *making* the damn stuff—just raking it in."

"People think they're just Heaven," Norma replied, holding her wine glass appreciatively to the fire's glow. "So many malls to shop in, all those ethnic restaurants to eat at. I think maybe you're showing your age, Williamson."

Perhaps so. Only, I feel as young as I ever did; rather, it seems to me that the world, not I, is aging rapidly—while growing demographically younger every day. "Well, I hope that's all it is," I said at last. "Because, if not—there is no God."

If you stick to reading about population increase and urban sprawl in the newspapers and apply your imagination to what you've read, it's possible to become much more depressed than it is necessary to be (yet). Taking the back roads east of Albuquerque, I had driven across open country from Pueblo, Colorado, as far south as Alamogordo, New Mexico: nothing but snow-covered mountains, the golden plains, and hundreds of miles of rolling pinyon-juniper upland. Still, all signs—social, demographic, environmental—point to catastrophe, which, Ed Abbey believed, is our only hope. Having died 13 years ago this March, he won't be around to experience it, though.

One way or the other, we're camped here in the Guadalupe Mountains of southeastern New Mexico to get away from abstractions and other phantasmal worries: Norma, escaping the city of Las Cruces; me, in search of Broke-Off Mountain, a symmetrical limestone structure ruined forever when the earth gave a casual shrug some tens of thousands of years ago, causing the extreme southern end to break away at a 45 degree angle, its bit of green forest tilted toward the desert floor. While living in Cruces myself, I had noticed the phenomenon on descent into El Paso Airport a hundred air-miles away and determined to explore it before moving up to God's country again. Better late than never—though the icy February wind coming off the Llanos Estocados (the Staked Plains) over in Texas seemed plenty reason to have made it later still. I hate wind, even worse than a horse does.

"Where's the tent?" Norma asked in a surprised voice.

"Off to your left over there, where the sparks won't find it."

"I'm looking, but I don't see anything."

Old Jules Sandoz would have had his ironwood stick in hand. Nowadays, men are expected to be more patient.

"It's *there*, Norma!"

Only it wasn't—just the two remaining stakes sunk firmly in the ground where I'd raised it a couple of hours ago, before the wind got up. It took the two of us a quarter of an hour to disengage the three-man tent from the circle of thorn bushes 50 yards out that had impeded its progress into the wilderness (still with the heavy sleeping bags inside), collapse it, and drag the wadded nylon bundle back to camp. Breathless from the struggle with the wind, the backs of our hands bloodied by thorns, Norma and I exchanged significant looks. "Let's do like the Boy Scouts and sleep in the truck tonight," I suggested.

Navigating without a map, we had planned to approach the mountains from the north by a county road coming south from Hope—a windswept desert hamlet, population about 30, lacking even a full-time gas station. You would *need* hope to live in Hope, New Mexico, while no one with hope would think of living there. But the single gravel road diverged into a tree of right-angled branches like the platting-map of an unbuilt city, and so we turned back finally, mindful of our gas and water supplies, to come round by Artesia and the chip-and-seal road into Sitting Bull Falls, where hunters in camouflage—out for Barbary sheep come to drink from the limestone *tinajas* in the canyons running down from the forested plateau above—were camped.

The wind blew throughout the night, rocking the vehicle on its springs, then died at a little past four in the morning when the sudden silence wakened me into the predawn dark. Norma cooked breakfast over a fire of *cholla* sticks, and we drank a pot of coffee boiled on the coals, listening to the canyon wrens rehearse the day from the feathered tops of the dry yucca stalks.

"Are we still looking for Broke-Off Mountain?" Norma asked.

"Sure. Why not?"

"I thought maybe you'd forgot about it overnight."

"It's been on my mind four years already, a symbol of something—I don't know what. Why should I forget it now I'm here?"

"Why shouldn't you?" she wanted to know.

We drove up to El Paso Gap on the plateau and south across the state line into Texas and Guadalupe Mountains National Park, where a lanky ranger in an official cap and coveralls was tending to

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two horses in a paddock. When I asked him about Broke-Off Mountain, he flung his arm out in a westerly direction.

"Take the Brush Mountain trail about three miles," the ranger said. "You'll see it as you come across the top at the high place, bigger than life ahead of you and—broke-off!" He laughed. "Kind of dramatic; an interesting geological event."

The trail followed the drainage among groves of live oak for half a mile before beginning climbout, around the tawny flanks of the steep-sided sugarloaf hills. Alternately shedding and adding layers of clothing, we made a forced march to the summit where I stood in a light wind with the collar of my polypro jacket turned up around my beard to survey 360 degrees of horizon, including Sierra Blanca to the Northwest, Guadalupe Peak southeast a few miles, the Cornudas Mountains thrusting like rusty shovel-blades from the salt flats below, and the nearly invisible smudge that was the sister cities of El Paso and Ciudad Juárez a hundred miles due west. Ahead, at about the 11-o'clock position, a green, rounded shoulder of the mountain—apparently an arm of the ridge we were standing on—mostly concealed the raw frontal rock from which a forward section might have broken off and fallen away to the desert below.

"If that isn't it, I don't know what else could be," I told Norma. "But it doesn't resemble at all what I saw from the airplane."

Down at the station, the ranger was not around for further questioning. We left the park, drove north by a gravel road along the forested rim of the escarpment, and made camp in a clearing in the piny-on-juniper forest, grown up with an impressive display of tire-wrecking pancake-pear cactus. We hauled out the tent once more, and once again—at 8:22 sharp—the terrible wind arose, gusting over 40 miles an hour and covering camp and the spread gear with a film of the finest wood ash. We slept in the truck again that night, woke to find the water jugs frozen solid as rock, started a fire to cook on, and finished by shoveling dirt over the coals and driving to Dell City, Texas, 1,500 feet down and south 50 miles across the barren creosote-bush desert for breakfast.

Dell City is an agricultural town of a thousand or so people in the Dell Valley, flat as linoleum beneath the sheer ramparts of the Guadalupe Mountains. Though we passed a Catholic mission at the outskirts, most of the population was parked outside the First Baptist Church across the street from Rosita's Café, the only establishment in town serving at 11:30 on a Sunday morning. We entered by mistake through the kitchen, where Rosita and her assistant were preparing a large pot of *menudo* for the luncheon crowd that apparently was expected, and went on to the restaurant, where five Mexican laborers sat with their coats and hats on to finish their meal. "Hi," they told us in a friendly way, "hello;" "*Buenas dias*," I answered them, before I could think. (It isn't kosher in the Southwest to speak Spanish to Mexican-*Americans*.)

We ordered *chiles rellenos* and *chile verde con carne* and sat drinking coffee, waiting for the meal to be served while the Mexicans paid up and left and two tall young Anglos in Stetson hats and Carhart jackets entered and stood briefly with their backs to the ancient gas stove burning with a clear blue flame against the wall. In soft-spoken, strangely gentle West Texan accents, they asked where we were from and apologized to us for the cold weather before ordering *menudo* and "*el té*" from the waitress, who spoke hardly any English. I thought to ask the taller of the two if he were familiar with Broke-Off Mountain, but he answered, after considering for a moment, that he'd never heard of it. "Add something that's eighty-proof to your water supply tonight," he added, touching the brim of his clay-colored hat to Norma.

Driving by Route 62-180 around the southernmost end of the Guadalupe Mountains, I searched in vain for a glimpse of what plausibly could be the mysterious mountain I had glimpsed so often from the air. We crossed the salt flats, climbed up the escarpment beneath Guadalupe Peak, followed the highway past the entrance to Carlsbad Caverns, and returned to Sitting Bull Falls by way of the Dark Canyon county road. Seeking protection from the wind, we appropriated a huge campfire ring sheltered by a deep overhang of rock beneath the limestone wall where last year's dry yucca poles and the flat green cactus paddles reflected the golden light of the sun from terraced gardens rising against the evening sky. Norma scoured the drainage for wood, while I climbed up to the ledge above camp and threw down what desert driftwood I managed to scavenge there. When we had a fair-sized pile to hand, we built a big fire and opened the last bottle of red wine from the camp box.

"This has been nice," Norma said. "I needed so badly to get away from the city and into the desert again."

"Never say I didn't warn you about Las Cruces," I told her.

"Las Cruces isn't a bad place to visit. But this could never be the country of my heart. Wyoming is."

"Mine is Broke-Off Mountain," I said. "Assuming it actually exists, of course."

For supper there was beef stew rolled in tortillas, dried fruit, and chocolate bars. We sat afterward with the coffee pot set firmly in a foundation of red-hot coals, drinking the rest of the wine and watching shooting stars from under the overhang, and I wished I'd brought a cigar to smoke on our last night in the Guadalupe Mountains. The *cholla* and cedar sticks burned fast, crumbling to a semblance of the ruined city and recalling a view of London I'd had years before, glimpsed at night from a Paris-bound flight beneath a smoldering layer of low cloud: the Strand, Picadilly, and Oxford Street outlined in lights, the Thames revealed as a black serpentine absence.

"I don't want to go back to journalism, the newspapers, and news," I told Norma, "to amnesty and Vicente Fox, George Bush and Saddam Hussein, Afghanistan and the World Trade Center, Palestine and Israel, Enron and the stock market, global warming and demographic catastrophe, mass migration, the European Union, and the death of the West. Especially, I don't want to go back there through Denver, Colorado."

"I just have the feeling we're in the end times, now," she said. "Everything passing away—except maybe . . . *this*."

Gazing down at the circle of struggling light at my feet, I thought: *What would you do if you had the power to end the world right now, put it out of its misery before things deteriorate further still?* It would be temptation for certain, irresistible possibly. In particular for a man in his 50's with a diminished future to look forward to, open perhaps to the perverse notion of everything going with him when he goes. But the world belongs to God Who created it and Who will end—or, rather, recreate—it in His own good time.

"Pass me the water can, would you please?" I asked Norma. "I want to douse the fire, hard, before we turn in tonight."

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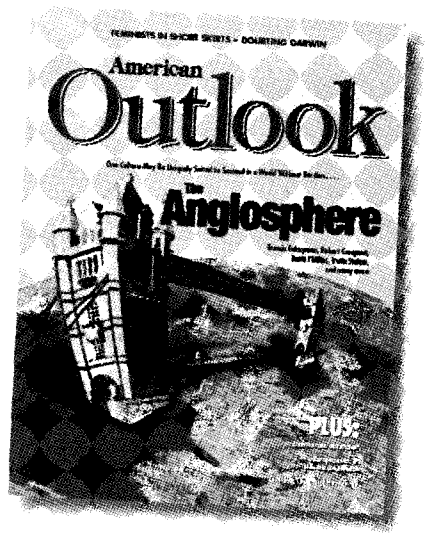

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